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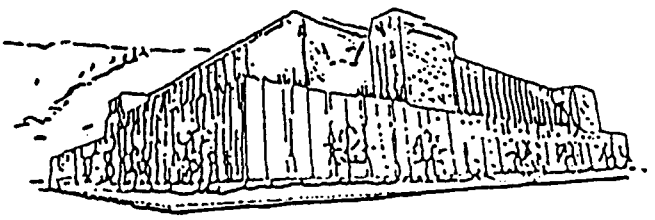
Analysis of dialectical tensions and communication strategies of resident managers and resident assistants

April Ennis Keippel
The University of Montana



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An Analysis of Dialectical Tensions and Communication Strategies of Resident Managers and Resident Assistants

by

April Ennis Keippel

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Dean, Graduate School

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An Analysis of the Dialectical Tensions and Communication Strategies of Resident Managers and Resident Assistants

Director: Sally Planalp

Resident apartment managers, resident motel managers, and resident assistants are required to live and work in the same place. In addition, they live and work in close proximity to their clients which is likely to create friendships. In this study, I focused on the dialectical tensions experienced by resident managers and resident assistants and the communication strategies used to manage those tensions.

Qualitative methods were used, specifically in-depth interviewing of resident assistants, resident motel managers and resident apartment managers from Montana and Idaho. Several dialectical tensions were found to be present for these on-site managers: Autonomy/Connection, Expressiveness/Protectiveness, Judgement/Acceptance, Equality/Expertise, Impartiality/Favoritism. Tensions of Autonomy/Connection and Expressiveness/Protectiveness related to issues of privacy. Many of the on-site managers felt they could not keep their work and personal lives separate. Tensions of Judgement/Acceptance occurred when managers were forced to apply policies uniformly, but wanted to be understanding of specific circumstances. Finally, tensions of Equality/Expertise and Impartiality/Favoritism occurred when the on-site managers were trying to be friendly, or even friends with their residents.

On-site managers were also asked about the multiple roles they had as part of their jobs and whether any of those roles conflicted. Resident assistants viewed "being a friend" as a role and experienced many tensions from trying to be a friend and an authority figure simultaneously. Managers were asked to give a definition of a friend and many viewed their residents as friends.

The final section examined communication strategies employed by on-site managers to manage these tensions. Eight strategies were identified: segmentation, denial, spiraling inversion, reaffirmation, empathy, emotion control, speaking as a peer, and defining friendship requirements. Implications of these strategies and suggestions for further research are also discussed.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

"I don't know if you know anything about farming, but if you know about milk cows, it's like having 100 milk cows, you're always feeding them, milking them, watering them. It's a constant job."
-"Bob", a resident manager

Introduction

For an estimated 20 million workers, telecommuting and other forms of home-based work are a reality (Deming, 1994). Changes are occurring in the workplace that modify traditional conceptions of "going to work." Companies are developing practices such as "hoteling" where desks are assigned according to a reservation system and "hot-desking" where several employees use the same desk at different times (Warner, 1997). Changes in technology, women's desires to bring in income and take care of their families, and companies' needs to cut down on office expenses all have contributed to an increase in the number of home-based workers. Yet, little is known about the advantages and disadvantages of home-based work. Is it, as some popular magazines proclaim, the solution to overcrowded freeways and costly childcare? Or is it, as others suggest, laden with problems such as underpaid workers?

Even though home-based work continues to increase due to technological advances, most research is focused on only one type of home-based worker, the telecommuter. Some research focuses on a broad conception of home-based workers, but even it fails to consider differences in occupations. Instead of focusing on telecommuters, I propose to focus on another type of home-based worker because of their unique relationship with their clients. Unlike telecommuters who often can work on tasks when it is convenient for themselves, resident assistants, resident apartment managers, and resident motel managers must respond to their residents as situations arise. In addition,

they are required to live in close proximity to their clients. This creates unique challenges for these on-site managers to negotiate. This study is in direct response to the need for further research into this unique work situation. In order to better understand this unique working situation, I begin with a review of the literature.

Work and Home

Historical Background

Before the industrial revolution, little distinction was made between home and work because the economy was made up of cottage industries. Products were created within individual homes. Then, as the industrial revolution took hold, home and work developed as separate areas of an individual's life (Henslin, 1985). Home was the private sphere of life, while work was the public sphere (Campbell, 1989). No longer did individuals create products within their homes, they now went "to work." Large factories replaced the small cottages and machines replaced handmade crafts. With the notable exception of farmers and ranchers, work and home were now two distinct arenas. Shorter (1977) states,"Nowadays, the dividing line between private and public spheres is clearly drawn, and efforts to blur it are seen as offenses against civil liberty" (p. 53).

However, some researchers suggest this dividing line is slowly becoming blurred again. "The boundaries which have traditionally existed between organizations, individuals, family, home life, and community will disappear as work becomes situation independent and centered in the home" (Guevara & Old, 1996, p. 712). McGoon (1996) suggests that unlike the changes brought about by the industrial revolution which drove workers out of the home and into factories, the current technological advances have created an opportunity for the return of work into the home.

Technological advances are only one of several factors that have contributed to the increased interest in home-based work (Masuo, Walker, & Furry, 1992). The unstable economy of the 1970's and 1980's brought about a demand for a leaner labor force, corporate restructuring and layoffs led some workers to start their own businesses out of the home (Cohen, 1997; Rowe, Stafford, & Owen, 1992). In addition, companies discovered they could save an estimated $5,000 annually in real estate costs and operating costs by having employees work at home (Reilly, 1997). For example, Georgia Power found they could save $100,000 a year by having their employees telecommute (McCune, 1998). The 1990 Clean Air Act also influenced the increase in home-based workers (Edwards & Field-Handley, 1996; Romei, & Fernberg, 1995). The Clean Air Act requires employers in the most polluted cities of the United States to reduce their employee commuting by 25%. In addition to the Clean Air Act, the government lifted a ban on almost all types of home-based work and replaced the ban with a certification system in the early 1980's (Masuo et. al., 1992). The only prohibitions that remained were for women's apparel and hazardous jewelry making jobs.

In addition to influences of companies and the government, increases in home-based work have also been brought about by employee demand. The composition of the workforce has changed to include more women with young children and self-employed individuals (Powers, 1995; Masuo et. al., 1992). Generation X employees, those born between 1965 and 1985, have also impacted the workplace (Herman, 1998). Employees in this age group demand flexible work schedules more often than other groups. As Ouellette (1998) notes, companies are offering telecommuting as a bonus to attract employees.

Home-based Workers

Total numbers

Already the Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates 20 million nonfarm workers work at home as part of their jobs, many unofficially (Deming, 1994). For example, many workers take projects home to work on after regular office hours (Russell, 1996). Find/SVP's American Information User 1994 survey (in Russell, 1996) found 9.1 million people spending at least one or two days a month working at home (a twenty percent gain over the number working at home in 1993). Cohen (1997) notes that "telecommuting alone is expanding at a rate of 15% per year and is estimated to have involved 30 million people in 1996" (p. 51). The federal government estimates that about 25,000 of their workers telecommute regularly (McCune, 1998). Kraut (1989) estimates that only 2% of the labor force works at home exclusively.

Problems with measurement

Exact numbers of home-based workers vary because of measurement difficulties. Kraut (1989) notes undercounts of home-based workers because of different definitions used by different agencies and an unwillingness by some workers to say they work at home. For example, some home-based workers might hesitate to reveal they work at home because they failed to report the income to the IRS or some might claim a home-based business for tax advantages. Still, the primary difficulty in measuring home-based workers seems to be the lack of a clear definition. As Rowe et. al. suggest, "systematic data on home-based work, or the generation of income at home, have been limited in part because there has been no standardized definition used for work at home" (1992, p. 163). The Bureau of the Census counted home-based workers as those that responded that they worked at home when they were asked about

transportation (Masuo, et. al. 1992). The Current Population Survey by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics definition included any person who took work home as a part of his/her regular job, so their definition included farmers and occasional workers (Masuo et. al., 1992). In 1991, the Supplement to the Census of the Population defined home-based workers as all nonfarm workers who did any work at home as part of their regular job (Deming, 1994). Deming compared the hours individuals reported they worked at home with the total number of hours worked and considered those whose total hours and home work hours were the same to be home-based workers. Masuo et. al. (1992, p. 252) defined home-based workers in their nine state study as "a person at least 18 years of age who worked in or from the home to earn income for a minimum of 312 hours over the past twelve months (without an office or other regular workplace of the property for this job)." Unfortunately, the studies conducted on a large scale do not have a clear-cut, uniform definition of a home-based worker.

Demographic Characteristics

Edwards and Field-Handley (1996) examined the demographics of home-based workers and found they were twice as likely to be disabled as on-site workers, more likely to be self-employed (63%), and more likely to work nonstandard hours (either fewer than 35 or more than 45). Over half the workers they studied were married with young children. Overall, they found most home-based workers are rural, self-employed, white females in the service industry (Edwards & Field-Hendrey, 1996). Masuo et. al., (1992) described the typical home-based worker of their study as an older male business owner, such as home maintenance contractors or truck drivers. In contrast, Horvath (1986) found most home-based workers to be in managerial and professional jobs. Powers (1995) in a study of home-based workers in New York found most

home-based workers to be near middle age, well educated, and male. Locker & Scannell (1992) found home-based workers in a nine state project to be primarily business owners (75%) rather than wage workers (25%).

Advantages

Working at home has several advantages. Several surveys have noted flexibility as the major benefit of working at home (Pratt, 1987; Kraut, 1989; Deming, 1994; Powers, 1995). For example, home-based businesses offer an individual opportunity for flexible hours by combining independence with work and family responsibilities. As Wood (1994) notes traditional work schedules "do not accommodate family needs and schedules" (p. 281). Nearly two-thirds of couples are dual workers, which means children are often left in day care. Child care is expensive and many parents feel uncomfortable leaving small children with strangers. Working at home provides a way to work full-time and take care of children (Masuo et. al., 1992; Powers, 1995).

In addition to flexibility in meshing family responsibilities and job responsibilities, home-based work is often less costly than traditional work. For example, individuals that own their own business can save on overhead costs by working out of their homes (Pratt, 1987; Kraut, 1989). Telecommuters can reduce expenses of money and time required to travel (French, 1994; Kraut, 1989). Even those who only work at home part-time still can save money on car repairs, gasoline, and other traveling expenses (Powers, 1995; Baruch & Nicholson, 1997; . For individuals living in suburbs of large metropolitan areas, the possibility of avoiding a slow moving commute has added appeal.

Disadvantages

Yet, while the benefits of flexibility and cost have been emphasized for home-based workers, disadvantages are also present with home-based work.

For example, French (1994) describes the disadvantages of telecommuting as having diminished ties to supervisors and coworkers, lack of benefits, and weight gain from being too close to the refrigerator. Powers (1995) found in his study of home-based workers in New York that home-based workers often felt they worked too much, lacked privacy, and had to contend with constant interruptions from their children. In order to make up for interruptions, the workers would have to cut down on other activities such as sleeping, socializing, or housecleaning. Roha (1997) describes loneliness and isolation as one of the disadvantages of home-based work. In addition, she notes that a home-based worker must be self-disciplined to avoid distractions of soap operas, the refrigerator, and housework. Allen & Moorman (1997) found home-based workers moving back to the office after being disenchanted with the lack of privacy, lack of support from fellow workers, and a perceived lack of professionalism by their clients. Rowe, Stafford, & Owen (1992) describe the unions' fears that home-based work undermines labor standards of safety and wages. In addition, some suggest that home-based work exploits workers who have limited work options such as minorities or women with small children (Rowe et. al., 1992).

Impetus for the Current Study

While these disadvantages are important, another important aspect of the situation has been overlooked. Nothing is said about the strategies the individual uses to balance the work and home aspects of their situation. For this reason, I propose to focus on these communication strategies individuals use to balance the work and home aspects of their situation, but instead of focusing on telecommuters, I focus on another type of home-based worker because of their unique relationship with their clients. Unlike telecommuters who often can work on tasks when it is convenient for themselves, resident assistants, resident

apartment managers, and resident motel managers must respond to their residents as situations arise. In addition, they are required to live in close proximity to their clients. This creates unique challenges for these on-site managers to negotiate. For example, privacy and friendships are likely to be issues because of the nature of the work and the close proximity to their clients. As a former resident assistant, I experienced tensions associated with my unique living-working situation unlike those experienced in any other work context. This served as an impetus for a qualitative study of resident assistants (Ennis, Roth, & Maynard, 1997). Although the study focused on staff interactions, an interesting pattern occurred in interviews. When asked what they liked least about their job, almost ninety percent of respondents described the difficulty of being a friend and being a disciplinarian. One respondent described being a disciplinarian as "being put in the situation where it's difficult to be a friend to them and want to help, try not to be hard, but let them know they crossed the line. I feel like they hate me when that happens." Another respondent described it as "when they get caught up in trouble and I have to do it, I feel sick inside...I know you can't be everybody's friend, but it's an uncomfortable role." These descriptions fit with the "pro-resident" style of apartment management in which the on-site manager strives to keep the resident happy and knows them on a first-name basis (King, Langendoen, & Hummel, 1984). As King et al. state the biggest problem associated with pro-resident management is that as a good friend the manager has difficulty enforcing the rules.

As the trend toward home-based work continues, focusing on residential managers provides insight into the relational tensions of this unique situation. Bridge and Baxter (1992) call for research to "pursue the role that social context plays in the internal dynamics of personal relationships. Personal relationships

are embedded not only in the parties' social networks of friends and family but in work environments, as well" (p. 222). In order to examine the tensions faced by the home-based worker, I turn to the theoretical literature on dialectic tensions.

Dialectic Tensions

Dialectical Theory

The goal of this study was to extend dialectical theory into a different context. Dialectical theory has been used to study friendships (Rawlins, 1989), romantic relationships (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996; Montgomery, 1992; Goldsmith, 1990), friendship in the workplace (Bridge & Baxter, 1992), and the role of physical environments in relationships (Altman, 1993). By examining dialectical tensions faced by on-site managers, I hoped to add a new understanding of the current conceptions of dialectical theory. Dialectical theory examines tensions by focusing on "the complexity and disorder of social life, not with the goal of 'smoothing out' its rough edges but with the goal of understanding its fundamental ongoing messiness" (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996, p. 3). Rawlins (1983) describes the three tenets of a dialectical perspective as contradiction, interconnection, and constant change. Baxter & Montgomery (1996) describe four common threads of a dialectical perspective: contradiction, totality, change, and praxis.

Contradiction

Contradiction is the "both/and" quality of relating (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996). Home-based workers experience that "both/and" quality because they are combining home and work. Goldsmith (1990) defines contradictions as "the underlying opposing tendencies in a phenomenon which mutually exclude and simultaneously presuppose one another" (p. 538). Contradiction is different from role conflict because a dialectic views the incompatibility as necessary but places

no value judgement on it (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996). In contrast, role conflict is viewed as negative and a static state.

Interconnection

The second tenet of a dialectical perspective, interconnection, also labeled totality, means that any aspect or component of the relationship exists and can be understood only in relation to the other aspects of the relationship (Rawlins, 1983; Baxter & Montgomery, 1996). Interconnection fits the situation of the on-site manager. The on-site manager's work and home are interconnected. When something happens in one area of his/her life, it effects all areas.

Change

The next tenet of a dialectical perspective is constant change (Rawlins, 1989; Baxter & Montgomery, 1996). Relationships are not static, but rather constantly changing and being redefined. This change occurs from the interaction of stability and flux, so even when stability is perceived, change is occurring, only at a slower rate (Rawlins, 1989).

Praxis

The final tenet of a dialectical perspective, praxis, refers to the idea that people are actors and objects of their actions all at once (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996). Rawlins (1989) states, "the subject molds and is molded by his or her social context" (p. 163). This means that people produce and are products of their own actions. For example, an on-site manager in a conflict with a resident both helped to produce the conflict through his/her actions and simultaneously his/her actions were produced by the conflict situation.

Dialectical perspectives have been used in several areas of communication research, including: friendships (Rawlins, 1989), romantic relationships (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996; Montgomery, 1992; Goldsmith,

1990), friendship in the workplace (Bridge & Baxter, 1992), and the role of the physical environments in relationships (Altman, 1993). A dialectical perspective is applicable to a wide variety of communication phenomenon, largely because it deals with "everyday human events" (Altman, 1993, p. 27). Baxter (1992) describes how she was "struck by the contradictions, contingencies, nonrationalities, and multiple realities to which people gave voice in their narrative sense-making of their relational lives" (p. 330). A dialectical perspective would encompass many of the issues of this study, including tensions of the physical environment and tensions in friendships.

Types of Dialectics

Rawlins (1989) describes two types of dialectics: contextual and interactional. Contextual dialectics arise out of a situation, such as the dialectics of private and public or ideal and real (Rawlins, 1989). An example of the dialectic of private and public occurs in cross-sex friendships between married individuals which are constrained by the public notions of the proper role of friendship. So, even though privately the relationship might prove helpful for the marital relationship, the public view of the cross-sex friendship as harmful to the marital relationship might led the individuals to define their relationship as a professional relationship rather than a friendship. The situational dialectic of the ideal and real occurs when people are encouraged to be friendly with everyone, but they need to perform certain behaviors to be considered a friend. Friendships are defined and ranked according to an ideal of a "true" friend. Because on-site managers are in a particular type of situation, living where they work, these dialectics should be important.

Interactional dialectics occur as a result of the interactions within a dyad (Rawlins, 1989). These dialectics are ongoing and occur everyday (Baxter &

Montgomery, 1996) On-site managers, unlike telecommuters, must interact with their clients. These interactions create the interactional dialectics.

Summary

There are four central tenets of a dialectical perspective: contradiction, interconnection (totality), change, and praxis (Rawlins, 1983; Baxter & Montgomery, 1996). Contradiction referred to the "both/and" quality of relating. Unlike role conflict, contradictions are inherent, necessary, and changing. In contrast, role conflict is stable and negative. Interconnection referred to any component of the relationship existing only in connection with all other aspects of the relationship. Change referred to constant change in which even perceived stability was only slow change. Finally, praxis referred to people being simultaneous producers and products of their own actions. The two types of dialectics were also examined: situational and interactional.

Multiple Roles

Another perspective for viewing tensions is to examine the conflicting nature of multiple roles. Unlike a dialectical perspective, role conflict is a stable, negative state (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996). Baxter and Montgomery's perspective examines the intra-role conflict of the incompatible expectations associated with the individual's "role" as a member of a relationship. In contrast, role conflict focuses on the organizational roles of members. Role conflict describes the "degree to which an employee experiences conflicting role demands and loyalties at work" (Rahim & Psenicka, 1996, p. 74). Rahim and Psenicka (1996) found role conflict to be related to the likelihood of an employee leaving a job. Other studies have linked reduced role conflict with increased customer perception of service quality (Hartline & Ferrell, 1996). Role conflict and role ambiguity have often been studied as a cause of stress in employees

(Smeltzer, 1987). Resident assistants and residential managers are likely to have multiple and often conflicting roles.

Several researchers have examined this role conflict in resident assistants. Deluga and Winters (1990) studied resident assistants at a primarily residential private business college and found resident assistants had difficulty simultaneously coping with roles such as disciplinarian, friend, model student, counselor, and teacher. Fuehrer and McGonagle studied resident assistants at one Midwestern University and discovered "when these students are called on as RA's to discipline or settle interpersonal conflicts with their peers, the confusion between friend and professional roles may become severe" (1988, p. 249). The role of RA often created a conflict with the roles of peer and counselor. Kolek (1995) researched these multiple and conflicting roles in his dissertation. He found female resident assistants had higher levels of role-related stress. Blimling & Miltenberger (1990) describe four roles resident assistants assume: role model, counselor, teacher, and student. Fuehrer and McGonagle note, "in this population then, a critical individual factor for predicting burnout is the conflict that exists between the dictates of the professional role of disciplinarian and personal values and needs for friendship" (1988, p. 245).

Friendship

Individuals who live where they work are likely to develop friendships because of the nature of their jobs. Wilmot (1987) states "friendship develops from transacting with others, and conversations are often started between those who share in an activity that places them in close physical proximity" (p. 91). Obviously people living where they work are in close physical proximity to those they are helping. Other theorists have suggested that friendships based on spatial propinquity are not completely voluntary and therefore not friendship

(Palisi & Ransford, 1987). However, Palisi and Ransford admit that for rural lower-income individuals voluntary friendship activity is carried out in the local neighborhood. Wiseman (1986) states that "friendship, unlike work or team relationships, is not organized around particular tasks. In it's purest form, its sole goal is its own preservation and enjoyment" (p. 192). Rawlins, Libowitz, & Bochner (1986) describe friendship based on proximity or frequent contact at work as Kurth and Wright's "friendly relations."

In addition to proximity influencing the likelihood of a friendship developing, the work itself could be a factor in friendship formation. Hendrick and Hendrick (1992) list the giving and receiving of social support as one of the defining features of friendship. Social support refers to "both emotional nurturance and support to actual provision of material aid" (Hendrick and Hendrick, 1992, p. 70). On-site managers are focused on providing social support to their clients as part of their occupations. Fine states, "the content of work affects the friendships that are likely to develop, in part because of the people that an occupation attracts and in part because of the nature of the work" (1986, p. 190).

The difficulty in defining friendship arises partly from its lack of an institutional status. As Rawlins (1989) notes, the distinction between "real" friends and casual acquaintances is based on an ideal. This ideal may be based in part on informal rules of friendship such as: sharing news, giving emotional support, volunteering help, trusting and confiding in the other, and enjoying the other's company (Argyle & Henderson, 1984). Davis & Todd (1985) developed a paradigm of friendship which included nine characteristics: the ability participate equally, enjoying being around the other person, trust, helping the other person and vice versa, acceptance, respecting the other's decisions, being able to be

one's self, understanding, and sharing experiences. Hay's (1988) definition of friendship seems to encompass most of these varied views:

> voluntary interdependence between two persons over time, that is intended to facilitate the social-emotional goals of the participants, and may involve varying types and degrees of companionship, intimacy, affection and mutual assistance. (Hays, 1988, p. 395)

Wiseman (1986) states that these aspects of friendship are an unwritten contract, which the relationship members do not have a clear understanding of until it is violated. The nature of these ideals of friendship produces inherent tensions with the requirements of the on-site manager's work.

Tensions

Several dialectical tensions are likely for this population based on responses given in a prior study (Ennis et. al., 1997). Dialectical tensions refer to the "both/and" quality of relating (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996). Tensions of Equality/Expertise, Impartiality/Favoritism, and Judgement/Acceptance seem likely to occur because of friendships that may develop between the on-site managers and their residents. In addition, tensions of Expressiveness/Protectiveness and Autonomy/Connection seem likely to occur because of the on-site manager's working and living arrangement. Each of these tensions is examined and examples of the tensions from the previous study are given.

Expertise/equality

Because the friendships develop as a result of the work environment, the on-site manager faces the "paradox of the 'friendly expert'" (Billig, Condor, Edwards, Gane, Middleton, & Radley, 1988, p. 75). Resident assistants, residential apartment and motel managers are all "experts," but when a friendship is developed with their client the expert role could be compromised.

As Billig et. al. (1988) state, "If the expert is too friendly, the claim to expertise is endangered, whereas too much technical expertise threatens the friendliness" (p. 77) Even kindness and sensitivity can be used as a form of expertise. Lamude & Scudder (1995) describe "ingratiation" as an influence tactic in which a manager will use friendly or helpful behavior to get their subordinate to think favorably of him/her before asking for something. In this example, kindness is definitely a form of expertise. Therefore, the Expertise/Equality tension occurs when the managers are supposed to be experts, yet still meet the expectations of friendship. In previous interviews with resident assistants, many resident assistants commented on the difficulties being perceived as a friend while they had to be the authority figure (Ennis et. al., 1997).

Impartiality/favoritism

Bridge and Baxter (1992) found several dialectical tensions associated with friends who were also work associates. While the relationships in this study are not between coworkers, the tension of impartiality and favoritism is especially relevant for this population. Most resident assistants and apartment managers are required as part of the job to treat all their constituents equally. However, as noted earlier, friendships develop when people are in close proximity. The "requirements" of a friend are to "help out" a friend in need (Argyle & Henderson, 1984). Someone working in this situation has to deal with the natural instinct to want to favor a friend while meeting the job requirement of impartiality. As Bridge and Baxter (1992) note organizational settings that are highly formalized with distinct rules and expectations associated with work roles should produce the impartiality-favoritism dialectic. In a previous study, several resident assistants mentioned the difficulty of having friends expect special treatment or favors. They felt like the friend expected them to "look the other way" when they were

checking out their room for damages (Ennis et. al., 1997).

Judgement/acceptance

Similar to the dialectic of impartiality-favoritism, on-site managers are likely to experience the dialectic of judgement-acceptance. Managers are required to evaluate clients according to criteria, but friendship suggests that you "look the other way" (Bridge & Baxter, 1992; Rawlins, 1989). Acceptance would require a manager to be sympathetic and understanding, yet one of the manager's responsibilities is to make judgements according to set rules and procedures. King, Langendoen, and Hummel (1984) suggest pro-resident managers encounter this problem. As a good friend, they have difficulty enforcing the rules because they would be too sympathetic and understanding of circumstances. In our study, one resident assistant described a situation where he had to write up a resident who had been drinking (on a substance free floor). The resident felt it should've been overlooked because he was going through a divorce. He told about how hard it was for his friend to accept that he hadn't made an exception for his circumstances (Ennis et. al., 1997). The other management style described by King et. al., pro-owner, keeps the interests of the owner in mind and follows rules and procedures exactly. This style would focus on evaluation, but would create an unsympathetic atmosphere. In interviews, one resident assistant described another resident assistant who had "gone on a power trip and [he's] regretting it now because his guys rip up his signs and stuff" (Ennis et. al. , 1997).

Expressiveness/protectiveness

Another dialectic which would be relevant for this population is Expressiveness/Protectiveness (Rawlins, 1989). Rawlins notes that developing and maintaining a relationship involves revealing thoughts and feelings, but

individuals must curb self-disclosure that would make them too vulnerable. In some instances, Expressiveness/Protectiveness seems to parallel Judgement/Acceptance. Friends are supposed to share news with each other (Argyle & Henderson, 1984), but their work role requires that managers keep matters confidential (Bridge & Baxter, 1992). In addition, to keep their role as "expert" managers might limit revealing areas of personal vulnerability (Rawlins, 1989). This could be difficult when living and working in close proximity to the manager's residents. One resident assistant described this difficulty as "living in a fishbowl" (Ennis et. al., 1997).

Autonomy/connection

The final interactional dialectic is the freedom to be independent and dependent (Rawlins, 1989), also labeled autonomy and connection (Bridge & Baxter, 1992). Rather than viewing closeness as similarity, positive emotions, or mutual dependence, connection is seen as one aspect of the Autonomy/Connection dialectic (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996). Individuals in a relationship must have both the freedom to be dependent on the other and the freedom to be independent of the other (Rawlins, 1989). This tension is likely to occur for the on-site managers because of the on-site manager's proximity to their residents. They interact with their residents on a regular basis, but the manager requires a certain amount of independence and autonomy. One resident assistant in our study described feeling "confined-stuck here" (Ennis et. al., 1997). The on-site manager has to be able to find time for themselves, yet meet the requirement of "being there" for their residents. One resident assistant described "being pulled in two directions-like I should study, but should be on my floor, guilty for taking the night out" (Ennis et. al., 1997).

Strategies for managing tensions

These dialectical tensions must somehow be managed through the use of one or more strategies: denial, disorientation, spiraling inversion, segmentation, balance, recalibration, integration, or reaffirmation (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996). Baxter (1988) describes three strategies for communicatively managing tensions: selection, separation, and integration (Bridge & Baxter, 1992). In studies of romantic relationships, Baxter found separation was most commonly used (Baxter, 1990). Based on previous interviews and my own experiences as a resident assistant, the strategies which seem most likely to be used by this population are denial (selection), spiraling inversion, segmentation (separation), and reaffirmation (integration). Each of these strategies will be examined in this section.

Denial

Denial (selection) involves responding to one pole of the dialectic at the expense of the other (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996; Baxter, 1988). For example, a resident assistant might avoid judging the behavior of a resident to be seen as accepting. While this strategy might work in the short term, it would probably not prove satisfying over a long period. The benefit of the use of this strategy would be that an individual could avoid trying to manage conflicting tensions by denying one aspect of the tension. However, the costs of using this strategy seem greater. The tensions would still remain, even if the individual denied them, and other parties might recognize their existence. For example, enforcing rules is an important part of the job description and a resident assistant unable to do so probably would find him/herself out of a job. So, the on-site manager who refuses to acknowledge the judgement aspect of the judgement/acceptance tension through the strategy of denial would likely be unsatisfied.

Spiraling inversion

Another possible response to the tension would be to use "spiraling inversion" and respond to one pole and then to the other (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996). For example an on-site manager might spend a lot of time with their client/friend for awhile and then spend time alone for awhile. This would enable him/her to move from connection to autonomy in an ongoing cycle. The benefit to this tactic is that the individual recognizes the tensions and systematically deals with each tension in a cyclic fashion. The problem with the use of this strategy for on-site managers is that the needs of their clients are often unpredictable. Crisis situations may occur and disrupt the cycle, causing the individual to devote themselves to one tension more than the other.

Segmentation

Another tactic used for resolving the dialectical tension is segmentation (separation), or compartmentalizing parts of the relationship (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996; Baxter, 1988). The manager might be open and disclose personal information when in his/her home, but keep closed about work-related topics unless at the "office". In this way the tension between openness and closedness is managed. The benefit of this strategy is that it allows an individual to respond systematically to tensions by setting aside certain areas for discussion. Even in a crisis situation, these "informal rules" would allow an individual to deal with tensions. This strategy seems most likely because it would require minimal effort to enact. In studies of status-unequal coworker friends, segmentation was the most commonly used strategy (Bridge & Baxter, 1992). The problem with segmentation probably would be defining the rules. For example, if the on-site manager has no "office space" in their home, how do they know when they are at work?

Reaffirmation

Finally, a person living and working in the same place might chose to resolve the tensions through reaffirmation (integration). This means that they recognize the dialectical tensions will always exist and celebrate the complexity of the situation. For example, in interviews many resident assistants acknowledged the difficulty of the situation, but also stated that they loved the people and that made it all worthwhile (Ennis et. al., 1997). The benefit of this strategy is that it is probably ultimately the most satisfying, but the problem is it is also the most difficult to achieve.

Summary

The dialectical tensions suggested by previous interviews were: Expertise/Equality, Impartiality/Favoritism, Judgement/Acceptance, Expressiveness/Protectiveness, and Autonomy/Connection. Expertise/Equality, Impartiality/Favoritism, and Judgement/Acceptance seem likely to occur because of on-site manager's friendships. Expressiveness/Protectiveness and Autonomy/Connection seem likely to occur because of the on-site manager's close proximity to their residents. Previous interviews suggested that on-site managers would likely use the strategies of denial, spiraling inversion, segmentation, and reaffirmation.

Research Questions

The literature describing dialectical tensions of friendships and friendships in the workplace does not address the friendly expert-client relationship. This is only one of many dialectical tensions that seem likely for individuals placed in this unique situation. As interviews from a previous study suggested, resident assistants experienced tensions in areas of rule enforcement, privacy, and fairness (Ennis et. al., 1997). These tensions are common themes in the

tensions of friendship and the friendly-expert paradox. However, the study was focused on social support among staff members, not relationships between the resident assistants and their clients. In addition, it is possible that resident assistants, because they manage their peers, experience different types of tensions than other on-site managers.

In addition, strategies used to deal with these tensions are important. While research in several different areas of personal relationships focuses on tensions experienced in those relationships, few studies examine how individuals manage those tensions. Goldsmith (1990) notes the need for data on how tensions are resolved or transcended. While Baxter (1990) found separation (segmentation) to be the most commonly used in romantic relationships, it is uncertain if it would be used similarly in this work setting.

As more and more individuals move toward home-based work, research on the dialectical tensions experienced becomes of practical importance. Further exploration of the nature of dialectical tensions experienced and the strategies used to manage them by this population is necessary. This leads to the following research questions:

(1) What dialectical tensions are experienced by the on-site managers?

(2) In what ways do the on-site managers perceive the requirements of expert and friend to be contradictory?

(3) What communication strategies are used to manage those tensions?

CHAPTER TWO: METHODS

In order to answer the research questions described in the previous chapter, interviews were conducted with residential apartment managers, residential motel managers and resident assistants. The use of these qualitative methods is examined in this chapter including a description of the participants, the use of a descriptive framework, and methods used to determine reliability and validity.

Participants

Participants for this study were a judgement and available subjects sample (Babbie, 1995) of resident assistants, residential apartment managers, and residential motel/hotel managers. Participants were required as part of their job to live on the premises. They were recruited from the cities of Billings, MT, Bozeman, MT, Missoula, MT, and Idaho Falls, ID. These cities were chosen because the researcher was able to travel to those cities to conduct interviews. In addition, they were small enough to support the types of properties that would have resident managers and in all the above cities (except Idaho Falls) there was a college or university which would have resident halls staffed by resident assistants.

Resident assistants were contacted by obtaining names and phone numbers through residence life offices or housing offices at colleges and universities in the above cities. One of the campuses I had originally planned to conduct interviews at (Bozeman) would not allow their resident assistants to be interviewed, so interviews were conducted at only three campuses. Five Resident Assistants did not come for their scheduled interview appointments and none of them called in advance to notify me. I did reschedule three of the five who had forgotten about our interview.

Apartment managers were contacted by phone through telephone directories. I first inquired if the apartment complex had an on-site manager and then asked for the name and phone number of the manager or they were contacted through referrals from other apartment managers. On-site hotel/motel managers were contacted by similar means. After obtaining the name and phone number of on-site managers, they were contacted by phone with a brief introduction to myself and the study. Then, a request for a one hour interview was made. The interviews were scheduled according to the on-site manager's convenience and took place in a location of their choice (generally a home or office). Many of the managers contacted were unable to schedule an interview in advance and told me to call them when I got into town instead. Two managers had to reschedule at the last minute.

Data collection methods

Descriptive Framework

Qualitative methods were used to explore the "subjectively held realities of social action" (Anderson 1987, p. 247). The categories of dialectical tensions mentioned in the previous chapter served as a "descriptive framework" (Philipsen, 1977). A descriptive framework is a "formal, general set of categories which guides discovery and provides a format for descriptive statement in any ethnography of speaking" (Philipsen, 1977, p. 44-45). A descriptive framework allows a researcher to avoid bias by making implicit categories and assumptions explicit. As a qualitative study, the aim of this research is a "search for meaning, not law" (Geertz, 1973, p. 5). I hoped to discover and understand the experiences of on-site managers.

Interviews

Baxter (1992) suggests that "field access" for a dyadic culture can be

discovered through in-depth interviewing of parties. While participant observation would be a useful method, access posed a problem. Because these individuals live and work in the same place, it would be difficult to live with them in their homes. Instead, ethnographic interviews were the most efficient and useful method.

Spradley (1979) states there are three elements to an ethnographic interview: explicit purpose, ethnographic explanations, and ethnographic questions. Ethnographic questions can be descriptive, structural, and contrasting. An ethnographic interview aims to discover the experiences of the informant and how the informant feels about the experiences (Whyte, 1984). Fontana and Frey describe an unstructured interview as the best way to elicit this information. An unstructured interview allows a researcher to probe more deeply with greater flexibility, but is time-consuming and often generates unnecessary information (Stewart & Cash, 1994). Therefore, semi-structured face-to-face interviews were conducted.

Interview Questions

The interview schedule (Appendix C) contained several open-ended questions designed to elicit information for research question one: what dialectical tensions are experienced by on-site managers. Question 1 was designed to gain a further understanding of the specific job of the participant. Questions 1A and 1B asked what the participant likes best about their job and least about their job. These questions were used in a previous study of resident assistants (Ennis, Maynard & Roth, 1997) and elicited responses regarding the difficulties of being a friend and a disciplinarian. These responses fit into the dialectical tension categories of impartiality/favoritism and judgement/acceptance. Question 2 (advantages and disadvantages of living and

working in the same place) also aimed to answer research question one. This also sought provide important information about why someone would chose or not chose to live where they work. Question 7 asked for differences between the participants on-site situation and more traditional jobs away from home. This question was to elicit information about tensions specific to the on-site manager.

Questions 4 and 5 aimed to answer research question two regarding the ways in which the requirements of expert and the requirements of friend are perceived to be contradictory. While in the earlier study of resident assistants this tension was apparent in nearly all interviews, it is possible that other on-site managers might not consider clients to be friends. (Although given the nature of the jobs and proximity, friendship is a definite possibility). Therefore, question 4A asked if the participants consider any of their residents to be friends. The participant's definition of friendship is asked in question 4. Question 5 asks if the participant has ever encountered a situation in which their relationship with a resident caused tensions with their job duties. This should provide information into the ways the requirements of expert and friendship are perceived as contradictory. Similarly, question 6 asked the participants about the multiple roles they have as a part of their job. Question 6A asked if those roles ever conflicted which should provide information on role conflict.

Question 8 was designed to answer research question three regarding what communication strategies are used to manage tensions. The probe for question 8 was designed to elicit information about strategies for dealing with the overall tension of living and working in the same place. In addition, following a description of situations in which specific tensions were an issue (question 3 A-D), a question about strategies used to deal with each specific tension was asked.

In addition to the qualitative open-ended questions, several quick quantitative questions were asked regarding specific dialectic tensions (questions 3A-D). Answers were on a ten-point scale from most important to least important. These questions aimed to discover which dialectic tensions are most important to on-site managers. In addition, those tensions which were important to on-site managers provided an opportunity for examining critical incidents of those tensions. Question 3A asked about privacy which was mentioned by resident assistants in interviews (Ennis et. al., 1997). This fit with the autonomy/connection dialectic. Question 3B asked about fairness (treating residents equally). This also was mentioned as a tension in interviews and fits the impartiality/favoritism dialectic. Question 3C asked about rule enforcement, which was the most common tension mentioned by resident assistants. This fits the judgement/acceptance dialectic. The final quantitative question, 3D, asked about the importance of confidentiality. This fits the expressiveness/protectiveness dialectic.

The last questions represent Stewart and Cash (1994) closing techniques. Question 9 was a form of a clearinghouse question to elicit any information not covered in previous questions (Stewart & Cash, 1994). Question 10 was a request for referrals of other possible participants. Interviews were be structured in Stewart and Cash's three part format: opening, body, closing (1994). The interviews were moderately scheduled with the major questions and possible probes (Appendix C).

Confidentiality

Prior to interviews, a consent form (Appendix B) was presented to each participant. This form assured participants that participation was entirely voluntary and that their responses would be kept confidential. In addition, a

portion of the form allowed the participant to consent to the interview being tape-recorded if they wished. All names were changed in the final report.

Thesis Data Collection

A total of 27 interviews were conducted between March 6 and March 20 in the cities of Missoula, Idaho Falls, Bozeman, and Billings. Thirteen resident apartment managers, 12 resident assistants, and 2 resident motel managers were interviewed for an average of 50 minutes. Only three of the interviews were not tape recorded at the request of the participants. The other 24 interviews were transcribed word for word, resulting in an average of 10 transcribed pages per interview. In addition, observation notes were taken during the interviews describing the location and the various interruptions that occurred.

Data Coding

Coding of data was based on the descriptive frameworks of dialectical tensions and strategies for managing tensions suggested by Baxter & Montgomery (1996). The transcribed interview notes were then coded using the descriptive frameworks in a two step process. First, the tensions were coded according to the framework. For example, a resident manager's comment that he was living in a giant fishbowl was coded as "Privacy" and "Expressiveness/Protectiveness." Next, the strategies used by participants were coded using the descriptive framework of strategies suggested by Baxter and Montgomery (1996). For example, a manager's comment that they would only talk about business during office hours would be coded as segmentation. The descriptive frameworks were chosen because they provided general categories to guide analysis.

Data Analysis

The data analysis method used in this study was constant comparison

(Glaser, 1962). Constant comparison involves moving back and forth between the interview notes and the descriptive framework to discover instances of the categories of the descriptive framework. This process was done twice, first for the dialectical tensions, then after the dialectical tensions were analyzed, the communication strategies were analyzed. These instances were then examined again to find possible larger groupings and categorized according to those larger groupings. Instances were compared to other instances that were previously coded in a certain category. Then the categories are related to other categories by examining the instances that describe the categories. Next the categories are limited as the data seems to be represented by the categories without the need for making new categories. The instances are easily placed into specific categories. Glaser (1962) refers to this as "delimiting." Finally, theory is developed by making connections between the categories.

Reliability and Validity

Qualitative methods have sometimes been criticized for poor reliability. Reliability, the extent studies can be replicated, can be improved through clear definition of the categories used and the characteristics of the population chosen (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982). Qualitative methods have been praised for high validity, measuring what is to be measured. Geertz describes the benefit of qualitative inquiry:

> studies do build on other studies, not in the sense that they take up where the others leave off, but in the sense that, better informed and better conceptualized, they plunge more deeply into the same things (1973, p. 25).

Reliability

Qualitative methods can encounter difficulties ensuring external and internal reliability, but steps can be taken to ensure reliability and validity of the

study. External reliability refers to the ability of another researcher to replicate the study (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982). External reliability can be problematic because the researcher is unique and will notice certain aspects while another researcher might not. In addition, the choices of participants will affect reliability. The participants were chosen according to availability, which could limit the representativeness of the study. However, the researcher did interview participants from several cities to improve the representativeness. In addition, by making implicit assumptions explicit through the use of descriptive frameworks and clear descriptions of the processes used reliability is improved (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982). Philipsen (1977) notes that a descriptive framework allows the researcher to detect and possibly correct for researcher bias. Philipsen (1977) states a researcher should specify the phenomenon to be described and the conceptual linkages to communication before beginning field work. Prior to beginning interviews, I had a clear understanding of the phenomenon to be studied and its linkages to communication.

Internal reliability refers to the extent that two researchers would code data similarly (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982). The interviews were recorded and transcribed to allow for the possibility of someone reviewing the data. Also, the transcriptions allowed for the use of the participants' own terms. In addition, clear descriptions of the categories of the descriptive framework were developed to making coding more reliable. As Philipsen states, "if there is to be partiality, and inevitably there will be, let it be deliberate and therefore detectable, rather than unwitting and therefore insidious and enigmatic" (1977, p. 47).

Validity

Validity, the extent that the study measures what it seeks to measure, can also pose problems. Internal validity can be a problem because of the selection

of the participants (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982). The participants should be representative of the diversity of the group being studied, but the participants for this study were selected based on their availability. However, participants were recruited from several cities to provide a representative sample. Still, the residential hotel/motel managers were not represented enough to really be included in the study. Residential apartment mangers and resident assistants were equally represented. Another way to improve validity is to develop concepts in more that one study (Philipsen, 1977). While a second set of interviews would have allowed for a check on validity, the researcher was unable to conduct a second set based on the time constraints. However, the researcher did paraphrase and use perception checking to ensure that the participant's views were understood. Also, the researcher had conducted an earlier study of this population which helped to develop a clearer understanding of native terms. In addition, as a former member of the group being studied, I was able to use and understand native terms. Philipsen (1977) argues that native terms should be elicited and used to improve validity.

External validity is the extent that the findings are applicable across groups (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982). The criteria for selecting participants was clearly described which would improve external validity (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982). In addition, participants were selected from several cities to increase the likelihood of external validity.

Summary

This chapter examined the methods used to conduct the study and the means taken to improve reliability and validity. The processes for recruiting participants, collecting data, and analyzing data are described in detail. In addition, issues of reliability and validity in using qualitative methods are

discussed.

CHAPTER THREE: FINDINGS

The findings of this study are based on the three research questions found in the literature review. The first section of this chapter reports the tensions experienced by on-site managers. Answers to the quantitative question of how important or unimportant those tensions were to managers are reported in appendix A. The second section examines friendship and the multiple roles of on-site managers and the tensions caused by these sometimes conflicting demands. The final section of this chapter describes the communication strategies used to manage these tensions.

Dialectical Tensions

Autonomy/Connection

Autonomy/Connection (Bridge & Baxter, 1992), also labeled freedom to be independent and dependent, describes the tensions that occur from needing to be independent and still needing to interact with people. On-site managers' proximity to their clients might make them more continuously involved with their clients and limit their autonomy.

This tension seemed to occur most often of all the tensions, especially for managers (both apartment managers and resident assistants) without a separate office area. Living and working in the same place created tensions with people's ability to be independent and have privacy (autonomy) because they were readily available for their residents (connection).

For some managers this tension was very pronounced. "Ivy" described how people would just walk into her home while she was doing dishes at the sink without knocking. She also told of people coming over at all hours, not just during office hours, even when the drapes were closed and the lights are out. In her opinion, the abuse of office hours "is just plain rude, I wouldn't do that to

them at their work." Dot and Frank, a management couple, described a similar experience:

> When we first moved in here, people would just walk in, they wouldn't knock. They assumed it was the office. Another thing to knocking, some would just peek in, so they don't consider it our home.

While Dot described the man that peeked in the windows as a "nice guy," she did admit that it was "kind of irritating that people don't knock because anywhere you go, you usually knock."

Similarly, some resident assistants also seemed to have difficulty with people entering their rooms unannounced. This privacy tension seemed to be caused more by co-workers rather than residents. Kia described coworkers that had access to her room going into her room without her prior knowledge or consent. Jenny told about leaving important things, or personal things lying around and having other resident assistants come into her room.

> I'm not the neatest person in the world and so it's like there will be times where I just like leave things laying around, important things, or personal things laying around and you know, not so much the girls because I don't mind if they come in because I'm a little forewarned that they're coming over, but sometimes my fellow RA's will just drop over unexpected and just kind of come in unexpected, even when I'm gone, they will have gone into my room and will have gotten things, taken things, so that bothered me for awhile.

Both resident assistants and on-site managers experienced tensions with needing time to themselves, but having to deal with residents' needs. Jenny, a first year RA, described needing time alone and people not picking up on that.

> Or even when I needed time alone, they, usually it's like I don't have to say I need time alone, usually by the way I act it's an indication of the fact that I want to be alone. But sometimes they don't pick up on that and they just keep coming over and coming over.

Becky, in her second year as an RA, noted trade-offs with privacy.

> I have a lot of privacy this year and I almost wish they would come see me more often, I almost wish I didn't have as much privacy this year, whereas last year it was definitely, I wish I'd had more privacy. I couldn't even sit in my room with my friends to watch 'ER' without someone knocking on my door for ten minutes, you know, every ten minutes somebody's coming by.

She describes the trade offs as :

> I knew my girls so much better last year and I had 40 girls last year and only 28 this year, but I probably knew almost all 40 of them and I don't know them as well here.

Susan, a resident apartment manager for eleven years, described a situation where a tenant kept coming over and coming over.

> I had one tenant here that I had a major problem with, when she moved in she would borrow my phone, which I don't mind if it pertains to a child being sick, or emergency, or something like that, I don't mind at all, but she was using my phone 8-10 times a day, so I was very nice about it, but I had to put a stop to that and then was coming over everyday and staying as long as she could.

After she tried to put a stop to that she found "this girl going through my mail and using my phone after I told her she couldn't." Susan did say that she has only had a situation like that a few times in eleven years.

More common were the phone calls after hours or residents wanting things "after hours." Bob, a manager of a motel and apartment complex, describes "I have three telephones and they're always ringing. You can't go back there and watch a TV Program because you never get to watch it all." Nick, an apartment manager for eight years, notes "everyone knows where you live, they call you for everything, whatever the reason." Sandy told of people calling at 9:00 P.M. to ask her to fix a plugged up garbage disposal, while Nick experienced people calling at 11:00 P.M. to complain about sink drips. Other managers had a hard time trying to use facilities after hours without tenants talking about work-related things. Max described "like if we want to go

swimming, we go swimming as a family after hours. It always seems a tenant won't accept it, they want to talk about something."

Phone calls and people coming to the door were common across all the interviews. Out of all the interviews I conducted, only two had no phone calls or interruptions. During most of the interviews, we were interrupted at least three times during the fifty minutes. Phone calls seemed most common, but several managers had people (residents and maintenance people) stopping by their office or home.

Summary

The tension of Autonomy/Connection was the most commonly mentioned tension. Most instances of the tension occurred when people would call after hours for problems that were not emergencies. Other managers experienced extreme tensions when people would come into their homes without knocking. Resident assistants seemed to experience the tension when staff members would enter their rooms while they were gone. Other times this tension occurred when an on-site manager had a particular activity they wanted to do and couldn't do it without constant interruptions from residents.

Expressiveness/Protectiveness

Expressiveness/Protectiveness (Rawlins, 1989) describes the need to be able to express certain aspects of one's self while limiting areas of personal vulnerability. Managers living and working in close proximity to their clients would be very visible, which could cause difficulties protecting aspects of their lives.

Like the autonomy/connection tension, expressiveness/protectiveness tensions seemed to stem from issues of privacy. Living and working in the same place meant that the person's personal life was seen by their residents

(expressiveness), even when the manager might want to keep it private (protectiveness). These tensions were described mostly by younger single women.

Betty, a young residential manager, describes a situation were she felt watched.

> I have a lot of elderly people here and some of these elderly women just think they should know everything about everybody that lives in our complex. I had my boyfriend over late one evening, he left about 1:00 A.M., and he did return the next morning about 6:30 A.M. for breakfast before work. And my neighbor proceeded to tell her neighbor that he spent the entire night.

Other managers noted that people did watch, but felt they had nothing they needed to hide. As Sandy, an older manager put it, "I realize that people know what I'm doing, so I guess if I were to have some sort of a risque lifestyle, which I don't, that might be a problem." Kyla, a younger manager, said:

> If I had a lifestyle that I didn't want anyone to know about, like if I smoked pot or something, I think that would cause a lot of stress, and I know a lot of people that are in that spot, but fortunately I'm not, I don't do anything illegal, anything I'd want to hide.

Bob described it as "I live in a giant fishbowl."

For resident assistants, the problem seemed to occur when they were dating. Vicky, a third year RA stated, "Everybody knows your business. You're living in a glass house." She found the tension most pronounced with "boyfriends, that kind of thing. Everybody knows what time they came, what time they leave. You have to be real careful about everything." Even opening a can of beer seemed to be noticed by Vicky's residents, "You open a can of beer in your room just because you're of age and the people on the floor who aren't of age have a comment to say, even though, I mean they hear it, the door's shut,

the drink's down..." Fawn described having a male friend over for five minutes and having half the floor ask about him, even though he she didn't think anyone had even seen him. Andrea, another third year RA., noted:

> Your personal life becomes, it's more known to everyone you work with and everyone you work for, the residents, because you do live where you work and all your visitors are pretty much known to your whole floor, your staff, and that can kind of be an issue sometimes.

Again for the resident assistants, staff members sometimes seemed to affect privacy more than residents did. Misty, a first year RA, said privacy was an issue with her staff members.

> As far as staff goes, with residents it's not a big deal because they all have their own lives, but with staff we all are each other's lives so, there's just things that have come up that I'd prefer not to have discussed with people I didn't know as well as I would've otherwise. The things that are all of a sudden other people's business.

Other resident assistants seemed to accept it as just part of the job. Becky, a second year RA, admitted that normally she would rate privacy as very important, but her job didn't really allow it.

> With this job you realize that that really isn't possible, and I guess other things in the job are more important and private than your own life. I mean you're kind of sharing yourself because you live there, they see who your friends are, they see who your boyfriends are, I mean they see everything, so it's not as important because there's not a lot you can do with it.

Other RA's, like Kia, described feeling "watched and evaluated all the time, and that my 'home life' is always under scrutiny by my residents and my coworkers."

Summary

Tensions of Expressiveness/Protectiveness occurred when the on-site managers wanted to keep an aspect of their lives private, but because of the proximity of the people around them, they were unable to keep it private. This

tension occurred most commonly with young female managers and resident assistants. Often boyfriends were noticed more than the on-site managers wanted.

Judgement/Acceptance

The dialectic of Judgement/Acceptance describes the tension created by needing to evaluate residents according to certain criteria and wanting to accept them as individuals (Bridge & Baxter, 1992; Rawlins, 1989). This dialectic parallels King, Langendoen, & Hummel's (1984) description of pro-resident managers and pro-owner managers. Pro-resident managers have difficulties judging residents because they are too sympathetic and understanding of circumstances.

Several on-site managers reported tensions with needing to maintain a professional attitude toward tenants and trying to deal with their own judgements about the tenants. Other times, they wanted to be understanding, but had to follow set guidelines and procedures. Or in other cases, they didn't like a tenant, but had to maintain a professional attitude toward them. For resident assistants, many of these tensions were present, but they will be discussed in the next section because they were related more to friendship issues.

> Kyla describes the tensions that occur from this situation:
>
> I have a resident that's a total pain in the ass, and I just want to tell her to get out of my office, you're pathetic, you're totally out of line, and it takes every ounce of everything I have to bite my tongue, use the same mannerisms, the same detachment that I would with any other resident.
>
> Susan described the same need for not showing judgements.
>
> If there is a person here and we don't personally like them, that doesn't get in the way with our job, or our business. You can't do that. They don't even know about it.
>
> Max described the difficulty of this tension.

> Actually sometimes when a tenant doesn't want to follow the rules and is a real hard tenant, you have to be fair, that's the bottom line, but sometimes it's hard to be pleasant to that particular tenant when it is, I mean if you were to compare it to someone that paid their rent on time.

Bob described how he'd "learned a lot of diplomacy since he quit farming."

Some tenants had connections with people that caused tensions for the manager in trying to treat everyone fairly. As Donna stated:

> I understand that everybody has, we have 120 units here and for every person here there's a different situation in life. When you manage apartments, you have to have a certain set of rules and they have to apply to everybody and they have to be fair and they have to be, um, what do I want to say, guided in the same way for everybody.

Yet sometimes that is difficult. For example Donna encountered a situation where her regional manager's mother was breaking the rules. She had to tell her boss's mother to live by the rules, which she described as "a nasty bit of business." Likewise, Bob had tenants with "friends in real high places," so he let them "do whatever they want." He described how his uncle had a cabin and thought "the world of these two girls, so if I want to go to the cabin, I have to."

Other managers spoke about wanting to understand specific situations, but that the rules had to apply to all tenants. Managers often had to contend with times where a tenant's particular situation might cause tensions with unilaterally enforcing certain policies. Kyla describes one such situation:

> I had a couple who got a kitten, you know the wife was having a hard time, and they got a kitten, well we're a no pet property and they had to get rid of the cat and it was really difficult. The wife was at an emotional place where it would benefit her. It was her mother's cat, the mother died and it was like you know, in a perfect world, you're right, you should have this cat, but you're at [name of apartment complex], that's our policy.

Max found it difficult to convince "good" tenants that they couldn't do what the "bad" tenant was doing. He described how a tenant had a big dog on a no

pet property and they were in the legal process of taking care of it, when another tenant asked to have a dog.

> The good tenant comes along and says, well this person has a dog, can I have a dog? And you tell them, no you can't and it was a tough situation because then they want to argue that this person has a dog and we had to explain to them that we're trying to take care of it, it's not something that happens in one day.

Summary

The tensions of Judgement/Acceptance occurred when an on-site manager wanted to be understanding of a resident's unique situation, but had to enforce policies. This tension occurred most often in situations where the manager knew about a particular situation, but had to enforce the policy even though it might not be beneficial to the resident. Tensions also occurred when managers had to deal with difficult residents and could not show outwardly their dislike for the resident.

Friendship and Multiple Roles

This section describes the findings of the second research question: In what ways do the on-site managers perceive the requirements of expert and friend to be contradictory? The first part of this section examines participants definitions of a friend. The second part looks at the multiple roles participants described. The final part of this section examines the conflicting demands of those roles.

Friendship

All of the Resident Assistants interviewed stated that they would consider some of their residents to be friends. Apartment managers had mixed responses. About half felt they had residents that they would consider to be friends. Prior to asking the participants if they felt any of their residents were friends, they were asked to give a definition of a friend. The definitions of a friend

were made up of similar characteristics.

Supportive

One of the most common aspects mentioned was "being there for you." Several participants described a friend as someone "who's there for you when you need them" and "is supportive of you." "Someone you care about and cares about you." "Someone who looks out for your better well-being, not just your short-time well being, but your overall." Other definitions included being someone you're able to "depend on" or "count on." One resident assistant said a friend was "someone who can support you, anyway you can, I think, regardless of what you believe, a true friend would do that, be there for you when you need them." An apartment manager used similar terms to describe a friend, "someone that will be there for you, no matter what, stand behind you and support you."

Confidentiality/Trust

The second area most mentioned in definitions of a friend was the ability to trust the person to keep things confidential. Nick, an apartment manager, described a friend as "someone you feel free to converse with knowing that what you're talking about is confident, confidentiality, and that they understand and will let you spill your guts." Donna had a similar definition, "somebody who will keep your secret, somebody you can confide in." Sandy had a slightly more colorful definition, "someone you can talk to, tell things to, and you're not going to hear them downtown." Other definitions touched on trust and "being able to tell your deepest darkest secret to them."

Enjoy being around

The final area mentioned in definitions of friendship was someone you could "have fun with." Often participants would mention "having things in common with them." Keegan, a resident assistant, defined a friend as

"someone to hang-out with, have fun with." Other participants, like Andrea, felt that a friend had to "enjoy the same sorts of things that you enjoy." Vicky also felt that a friend was "a lot like yourself."

Differing degrees

Most participants stated that there were differing degrees of closeness of friends. Several described a "true friend" or a "close friend" in their definitions. When asked if they considered any of their residents to be friends, most clarified that they did, but not to the same degree of closeness as their definition of a friend. Keegan said, "I think they're mostly on the acquaintance level, there are a few that have gone beyond that, but I know that if I compare them with other friends I have, they're not as deep as the friendships I have with other people." Ivy said that she considered some of her residents to be friends, but "I mean not always deep friends." Another manager said that she would consider some of her residents to be friends, but "they're not always close friends. It's hard to do this job and have very close friends." Dot described how she did have a "close" friend who happened to be living in the complex at the moment, but they were friends before she moved there. Sandy, another manager, described having "several friends here." She also noted that "I have one woman here that is a very good friend, but I'm very careful not to talk to her about, I don't talk to her about any other tenants here." Several resident assistants mentioned that they are "close friends" now with residents that are no longer on their floors.

Multiple Roles

Resident assistants and resident managers saw themselves as having multiple and often conflicting roles. This section describes the roles mentioned by resident managers and the roles mentioned by resident assistants. The conflicts, or tensions, created by these roles will be examined in the next section.

Roles of Resident Managers

The resident managers' roles differed depending on whether it was a couple that were managing together, or if it was an individual. Often managers would mention that the role wasn't really part of their job, but that they did it anyhow. Many of the roles were related to specific jobs the manager did, such as "repairman, gardening, collection person." Other roles related more to their relationships with the residents. Mary, an elderly apartment manager, described one of her roles as a "grandmother." Bob and Mary both described being "a shoulder to cry on." Some saw themselves as "role models." Donna described feeling like "I am their mother, their daughter, their mediator, their policeman, whatever." Another manager, Nick, said he was a "mediator, policeman, lifeguard, garbage man, inspector, you name it." Kyla described being an enforcer, a leader and a role model for the kids.

Roles of Resident Assistants

The resident assistant's roles were more uniform across participants, even those from different Universities. Most resident assistants described their roles as "friend, disciplinarian, counselor, information resource, and programming director." Candace described these roles similarly to other resident assistants:

> Be the friend, I would say, being like a parent almost, being an enforcer, I guess, in a way, I'm trying to think of ways to describe these, what's a good word for, just being a good resource I guess for the University, I guess that's pretty much it, all I can think of."

Becky used similar terms:

> Well friend, of course, resource, like I said a little bit of counseling, you know as much as I can or want to try to accomplish, let's see, of course you are an authority figure, and I don't like to think of it this way, but I suppose a role model.

Interestingly, every resident assistant described being a friend as a role. Misty describes the unique nature of this role, "having to be a friend, I can't think of too many jobs I would otherwise be in where I'm expected to be everyone's friend."

Tensions with Multiple Roles

This section examines tensions created by the multiple and often conflicting roles of on-site managers. Participants were asked if the roles they described ever conflicted. For apartment managers the conflict seemed to be more in terms of things needing done at the same time. Resident assistants seemed to have clear problems with the contradictory nature of the role expectations. These contradictions seem to produce tensions of expertise/equality and impartiality/favoritism.

Expertise/Equality

The "paradox of the 'friendly expert'" described by Billig et. al. (1988) occurs because if the expert is too friendly his/her expertise is threatened, but if they are too expert, the friendliness is threatened. Managers need to maintain expertise, but at the same time they are expected to be friendly and helpful. Misty commented on this tension:

> Having to be a friend, and as the job role being a friend, everyone knows that it's my job to be their friend, so how am I going to do that in a sincere manner, how is it that I communicate all those different sides of friendship, when it's clearly my job role?

Even one of the residential managers described a similar problem, "I think because I live here where I work that people take it for granted that I am their 'friend', when really I'm just an acquaintance or their neighbor." Jeff, a resident assistant, describes the need to maintain his expert role as counselor while still keeping his friend role.

> Sometimes as a friend I like to give advice, and as a counselor that's not always the best idea by any means, being someone that gives references, reference someone to a particular department or the health service is usually in the best interest of the resident.

Ryan describes the difficulty of being a friendly expert, "It's really hard to form that bond when you have to be, when you have to enforce those policies if anything were to happen." Jenny, a first year RA, described "keeping a slight wall between us. I don't really let it get as close of friends as I am with my coworkers, just because I know it would be difficult if I was ever in that situation." "I am here for them, they are not here for me."

Impartiality/Favoritism

The other tension caused by the conflicting roles of friend and enforcer is Impartiality/Favoritism. Impartiality/Favoritism (Bridge & Baxter, 1992) occurs when the on-site manager's job requires that they treat everyone equally, but the requirements of a friend are to help out (Argyle & Henderson, 1984). This tension would occur because of the conflicting role expectations.

When asked if any of the multiple roles ever conflict, almost every RA mentioned the friend and enforcer, or friend and authority figure roles conflicted. Andrea, like many RA's, thought "the disciplinarian and the friend one really does. Some residents you become close to and when it comes time when they're doing something inappropriately you have to remind them what they're doing and what the rules say." Misty described this tension:

> It conflicts when, geez, being a leader expecting a certain manner of doing things and having an idea of what I want to see on my floor, what behaviors I want to facilitate, and yet being a friend. Usually being a friend you're just getting to know the person and whatever they do bad, you find a way to deal with, whereas, I'm also a leader, so something that I have a problem with could very well be a problem that's causing more problems and is not OK, so it's something I

need to address as a leader and not as a friend.

Some Resident Assistants had difficulties remaining impartial when it came to enforcing rules on their friends. Ryan described a situation with a friend of his, "towards the end of the year he got into drinking a lot and it was hard, I never enforced the policy against him. Most of his friends were 21, but even though he was under age, theoretically I was supposed to write him up when he would drink with him, I never did. I let him slip through the cracks, which was wrong, but I learned from it. I really did because it came back to haunt me." Another Resident Assistant, Vicky, had a friend that was smoking marijuana and she knew about it, but "really didn't tell anyone that it was going on," but described how she would've had to deal with it if "I would've walked past and smelled it when I was roving, I'd have to do something about it and they knew it."

One of the resident apartment managers, Bob describes the tension experienced when he enforced policies to a friend, "we weren't friends anymore after I called the police on him. I gave him about ten warnings, and they don't listen to you, so the friendship dies." Several apartment managers encountered situations where residents wanted special favors (favoritism). Susan described people trying to bribe her to be at the top of the list to get into their low income housing. Donna described a resident wanting her to "overlook her rent for a month."

Strategies for Managing Tensions

This section examines the findings of research question three: What communication strategies are used to manage those tensions? The strategies are examined for the tensions of Autonomy/Connection, Expressiveness/Protectiveness, Judgement/Acceptance, Expertise/Equality, and Impartiality/Favoritism found. Within each tension, the strategies of denial,

spiraling inversion, segmentation, balance, and reaffirmation are discussed.

Strategies for managing Autonomy/Connection and Expressiveness/Protectiveness

The tension of Autonomy/Connection seemed to be the most prevalent across all the types of on-site managers. Individuals described being "always at work" and having interrupted "personal time." Expressiveness/Protectiveness also related to the issue of privacy. This tension occurred when people around the managers noticed more of their personal life than the managers would've expressed otherwise. The strategies used to deal with Expressiveness/Protectiveness were the same as those used for Autonomy/Connection. Most managers seemed to rely on segmentation, spiraling inversion, or reaffirmation to manage these tensions .

Segmentation

The segmentation tactic means that the managers compartmentalize parts of their relationship. For example, Ivy described how she would not talk about business after hours with tenants. Max had a similar policy that he and his wife communicated to the tenants when they first took over the complex. He sent out a written memo saying "this is my work from 8-5, and after that unless it's an emergency..." They sent out a reminder that after 5 o'clock they should be paged only in emergencies. Dot and Frank also used segmentation by never doing business in their apartment. They would communicate where business was done by showing people the office when they first came to the complex. They would explain where to contact them for business activities. Kyla also directly communicated when she was working and when was private time. In every newsletter sent out to her residents she had an explanation of what to do in

an emergency situation and a definition of what an emergency was (fire, flood, or blood). If residents didn't follow the procedure of paging the maintenance person first, she would tell them to do that and if they couldn't get ahold of him then come bother her. Ivy also practiced segmentation by communicating to people that didn't follow the office hours either she would help them this time, but not to in the future. She also communicates the office hours to them when they move in and provides them with the knowledge of how to get ahold of someone for an emergency.

Other managers spoke of "putting on different hats." Donna spoke of confronting her neighbor that had told another neighbor that her boyfriend had stayed the night.

> The next time I confronted her on it and I said, I would appreciate you not telling tales out of school because what you perceived you saw was totally false. And that ended it, because at that point in time I am her neighbor, I'm not the apartment manager, on my off time I am her neighbor only. So, I put on a different hat that way.

Managers using the strategy of segmentation would compartmentalize parts of their lives. Some managers would not take calls except in emergencies after hours, thus segmenting work and home times. Other managers would describe themselves as being in different roles (putting on different hats) after hours.

Spiraling Inversion

Managers using the strategy of spiraling inversion will respond to one pole for awhile and then respond to the other in an ongoing cycle. Several managers used this strategy by physically removing themselves for awhile. Susan, an apartment manager for 11 years, said, "I can tell when I need to get away for a bit, I can tell when I start getting really frustrated I need more privacy, so we

usually take a trip for a weekend or something." Sandy describes going for coffee everyday at three o'clock to "go out and visit with people because it takes me away from here." Nick gave similar advice for dealing with the tensions, "be sure you have some freetime away from here. Go someplace." Several resident assistants mentioned needing to "plan your fun." Candace described the need to "consciously remember to give yourself time."

Although for Resident Assistants that do not have set office hours, this strategy can be difficult because as Jeff notes:

> It's hard to know when you're going to be off duty. Walking down the halls, riding up the elevator, any time you're not expecting it you could find students doing something they probably shouldn't and then you have to put the RA hat on and decide if it's something you need to take care of rather than just go take a shower and go to bed.

Managers using the tactic of spiraling inversion to manage tensions created by Autonomy/Connection and Expressiveness/Protectiveness would respond to one aspect of the tension for awhile and then to the other for awhile. Most often managers employing this strategy would physically get away for awhile. Other informants would plan time for themselves and would "plan their fun."

Reaffirmation

A third strategy used to manage those tensions was reaffirmation. Using this strategy people would recognize the tensions will always exist and celebrate the complexity of the situation. Becky, a resident assistant, describes this strategy when she says:

> It was a little frustrating at times, but dealing with it wasn't too bad, I just tell myself that obviously they care, they're coming to see me it's important, and it's important to me too, so it wasn't too bad. I guess I enjoy that, I enjoy people so much that it's not as big of a problem.

Sandy, an apartment manager, describes how she had someone tell her "that this was the kind of job that would drive you nuts, well it probably is, but it's a real enjoyable job." Mary, an apartment manager looked at the calls at odd hours as "just part of the job."

> Jeff explained the importance of perception:
> When you're stuck in your room, in fact that's a bad phrase for me to use because I don't actually consider it being stuck in my room, if you're viewing it as an opportunity to do something rather than a negative effect..I use that phrase, I probably use it constantly, but I don't actually view it as that. It's each negative thing is probably an opportunity in disguise, which is really cheesy sounding, I realize, but if you take advantage of those, your stress levels will be noticeably smaller.

Managers using the strategy of reaffirmation to manage the tensions of Autonomy/Connection and Expressiveness/Protectiveness recognized that the tensions will always exist and celebrate the complexity of the situation. Many of the resident assistants and resident managers said they found the variety to be the best part of the job, which definitely would be "celebrating the complexity of the situation."

Summary of Strategies. The tensions of Autonomy/Connection and Expressiveness and Protectiveness were managed through three strategies. Segmentation allowed the managers to compartmentalize parts of their lives. Spiraling inversion allowed the managers to respond to one aspect of the tension for awhile and then respond to the other for awhile in an ongoing cycle. Finally, Reaffirmation allowed the managers to recognize the tensions would always exist and to celebrate the complexity of their situation.

Strategies for Managing Judgement/Acceptance Tensions

Several of the on-site managers experienced tensions when trying to be understanding of unique situations and still enforce requirements for everyone.

The other area that this tension was prevalent was when managers didn't like a person, but still had to treat them professionally like everyone else. The strategies that were used the most to manage this tension were empathy and emotion control. Neither of these strategies was anticipated by the researcher and did not fit neatly into any of Baxter & Montgomery's strategies (1996).

Empathy

Most managers tried to show empathy and understanding of one aspect of the tension when dealing with acceptance/judgement. The managers had to enforce policies that didn't take into consideration people's unique circumstances, so they often would first listen to the resident and then state they understood and ask the resident to "put yourself in my shoes." Donna, an apartment manager, employed this strategy when she confronted her boss's mother after she had broken the rules. She described her strategy:

> I called up my manager's mother and I said you need to come over here, you need to get these people out of here and you need to live by the rules the same way everyone else does. I said, I understand your son is my boss, but you have to understand your son was instrumental in these rules and regulations and I have to enforce them and I'm doing it right now.

Donna told her boss's mother that she understood the situation, but she also had a job to do, so she asked the mother to understand her point of view. Jeff, a resident assistant, used a similar strategy when a resident was violating quiet hours. He states:

> I have no problem with face to face talking or that sort of confrontation, if you want to consider it that, I don't like to go in with this is the rule and you have to follow it attitude, I don't think that's really effective, at least not for me. I sit down and ask them what they're feeling and how they go about coming to whatever conclusions they're having and we go from that standpoint. I think if you listen to your residents or your staff you're going to get much better results.

Yet Jeff also mentioned that just listening to a particular situation was not enough, he had to still follow rules. He describes:

> They'd say, well other RA's just look the other way and that's where I'd say, well that might be the case, but that's not me because if I were to do that I'd feel terrible. I mean, I'm getting paid to do a job and I'm going to do it to the best of my ability and that includes the unfortunate side of discipline as well....if they ever have a problem with how I'm running things, they are more than welcome to come and talk to me about it, even if I think they're wrong, I'll sit and debate it until they're satisfied.

Andrea, another RA also emphasizes the importance of listening to try to understand the resident:

> You definitely have to listen to the person, give them positive, you know, use active listening, make sure they know that you're paying attention to what they say and that you understand it. Um, paraphrasing what they say back to them I think is important to make sure you get the right idea of what they're trying to convey to you. Then after listening to them fully, saying yes I can see how you got this confused, this is what I did, how do you feel about that, getting more information from them and again dealing with information by this is how I feel, trying to come to some understanding with the resident before you let them out of the room so there's no hard feelings.

Kyla, an apartment manager, used this strategy when dealing with her resident that had a cat on a no pet property. She acknowledged to the resident:

> You know in a perfect world, you're right, you should be allowed to have this cat, but you're at "Firefly Apartments," that's our policy.

She described her use of this strategy:

> It's impersonal. I understand the situation is hard, but it's not about me. It's the apartment complex. This is a housing project, you agreed to live up to these {rules} when you moved in and you simply need to live up to what you agreed to.

Susan, another apartment manager, used a similar strategy when someone tried to bribe her to be put at the top of the waiting list for their low income complex.

> I've even had people try to bribe me to be put on top of the list, and I have had to tell them, how would you feel if you were at the top of the list and someone came in and wanted me to put them up above their name, this is what I told this one gal, and she wasn't expecting me to say that. She was kind of quiet and said that's true isn't it. And I said yes. Let them think about it for a minute, you know.

Occasionally, an informant described having difficulties with empathizing too much with the resident's situation and had difficulties judging the person's behaviors according to established policies. Ryan, a resident assistant for three years, describes this difficulty:

> It was tough, I had a tough time my first year doing it {enforcing policies}, I mean if I had to do it, I did it, but I felt guilty doing it. You mainly enforce the alcohol policy, underage drinking. Well, I'm not going to lie, I drank when I was under 21, I mean I never did it in the halls, but it's hard to, it's kind of like the pot calling the kettle black. I'm writing them up for drinking, because they're under 21, yet the next weekend I go home and do the exact same thing.

Other times, an effort was made to separate judgement of the person from the judgement of the behavior. Brenda, a resident assistant describes "trying to say the good with the bad."

> I try to say the good with the bad. Like if we're doing a discipline, we like to say we're not judging you as a person, we're judging this action, this one time in your life kind of action, and it says nothing about you and we want you to know we're here for you. And that's usually how we end our disciplines, our doors are open if you need to come talk to us.

Empathy was one strategy used by on-site managers to manage tensions of Judgement/Acceptance. Managers using this tactic would often ask residents to put themselves in the manager's shoes. Other managers would let the resident know that they understood and empathized with their situation and were judging their actions, not them as a person.

Emotion Control

The other strategy managers seemed to use to manage tensions of judgement/acceptance was emotion control. Managers frequently described controlling the expression of emotions, especially anger and frustration, when dealing with residents. Kyla, an apartment manager, describes trying to control her emotions when dealing with a resident she didn't like.

> It takes every ounce of everything I have just to bite my tongue, use the same mannerisms, the same detachment that I would with any other resident.

Another manager, Bob, described finding someone else to deal with a difficult person:

> I usually go get my dad or my brother because I get mad. You just, you can't get mad. You just have to keep pushing, you know, please, please, please...
> I've learned a lot of diplomacy since I quit farming. Have to have more patience...

Several managers mentioned patience as being important. As Bob said:

> Be as patient as you can, understanding. Patience, patience, patience. People are yelling at you <u>all</u> the time. And have a good bar out of town.

Likewise, Becky, a resident assistant, commented on the importance of patience.

> I mean, you can't lose your patience because then you've just totally given them what they want to see. And it's like if you lose your temper then that's what they're trying to do, provoke you, so it's like you know I always thought kill 'em with kindness. It's like be polite, you know, what can they say to that.

Susan, a manager for eleven years, also described controlling emotions as a key strategy:

> Number one thing I would say is to be calm, be kind no matter how frustrated you are, deal with each thing individually as best as you can. Even though you might be stressed, don't show it outwardly.

Becky, a resident assistant, had difficulties dealing with a resident with severe emotional problems. She had to sometimes leave the situation to remain

in control of her emotions.

> Sometimes with the girl next door it would be really hard. I would just have to just really relax because she would say some of the nastiest stuff to me, but I realized that she had other problems too that were emotional and physical and there was more to it than I knew about. But it was really hard, I'd just have to relax, calm myself down, or sometimes leave my room...

Occasionally a manager would relate a situation where they didn't have control of their emotions when dealing with a resident. Dot, a residential manager, describes one such situation:

> I don't think it ever helps to get mad, you can come into your apartment and get mad if you want (laughs). I think I only had one episode that a lady called me one time and I hung up on her (laughs) and that just wasn't me, but I just, I didn't have to listen to what she was ranting and raving about, you know, (laughs) and I thought, then I felt bad after I did it, but I thought listen, I don't have to put up with this.

Sandy, an apartment manager for eleven years, describes the importance of humor once a difficult situation has passed.

> The things that happen here are really, sometimes they'll make you flare up, but they're really funny when you sit back and look at them.

Several managers used the strategy of emotion control to manage the tension of Judgement/Acceptance. Generally the managers were trying to control the expression of feelings of anger and frustration with tenants. Patience with residents was a key part of this emotion control strategy.

Summary of strategies. Managers employed two main strategies to manage tensions of Judgement/Acceptance. Empathy allowed the managers to ask the residents to put themselves in the manager's shoes. In addition, empathy was used to understand the person and to judge the person's actions and not the person themselves. Managers also used emotion control to manage the Judgement/Acceptance tensions. Managers would control the expression of

anger and frustration.

Strategies for managing tensions of Expertise/Equality

The tension of expertise equality occurs when the managers are expected to be experts and yet be friendly, or in the case of the resident assistants be friends. Billig et. al. (1988) describe the "paradox of the friendly expert" as too much friendliness endangering the expertise and too much expertise getting in the way of friendliness. While this tension was most pronounced for resident assistants, apartment managers also mildly experienced the tension. The most common strategies used to manage this tension were denial and speaking as a peer.

Denial

Resident assistants and managers using this strategy denied one aspect of the tension. For example, many resident managers stated that they felt they couldn't be friends with their residents. Donna describes how her management group warns against becoming too friendly:

> My management group warns against, and very judiciously, I might add, is that you don't become too friendly with those people around you, that are living here. And the reason why is if you get too friendly with a person, they might want to take liberties, like say you know can you overlook my rent this month, can you do this, can you do that. That's why I have maintained an arm's length to all my residents and my neighbors here, and it's a shame you have to do that, but I'm in a really different situation than anybody else in this complex.

Kyla, another apartment manager, spoke about learning to remain as strictly a manager and not a friend.

> I dated one [a resident] and this was about eight years ago, back in Chicago. Sure, it jeopardized my job and eventually cost me my job, so I learned early that fraternization is a good policy to avoid, I mean it's good to enforce it, you don't get involved with residents, especially not with your

> lawsuits today. It's not even an issue for me, for me it's not even an issue. People can come in and be friendly and talk, but outside of here it's very clear. And I guess that's because I've been in this awhile and know what works and what doesn't work.

Bob a resident apartment and motel manager had a similar experience.

> Can't really be friends with these people, I tried that. They push it. Years ago (sigh) I tried it, it doesn't work. They're always going to take advantage of it. I just don't interact socially with these people here, let's put it that way.

Another motel manager, Karen, described the importance of not being taken in by sad stories.

> Just a reason for not paying for their room in advance, tomorrow I have money coming or something like that, and when it's really cold out, it's not easy to turn somebody away. There's professionals, a lot of them. We had one guy go so far as to have a buddy of his call us up and say that they were a trucking company in the area and they had a truck broke down and they needed to put up their man and they were going to wire money on Monday. Well, we should've called back to be sure... It's kind of sad actually because we were the type that trusted everyone and they kind of take that away from you. We have a hard fast rule that our employer won't let us give any credit, and that solves it. It took awhile to realize that that's what you have to do.

Apartment managers often managed the Equality/Expertise tension by denying the aspect of equality. Many managers did not get real friendly with their residents to be able to maintain a professional stance. In addition, they learned to be detached when dealing with residents.

Speaking as a peer

Resident assistants used a strategy of speaking as a peer to manage the tension of equality/expertise. Many of the resident assistants spoke of treating residents as adults when the resident assistant was in their authority role. Ryan, a resident assistant for three years, describes his use of this strategy.

> I would talk to the resident and I would be like, you know, but

> I'm on duty tonight and this is how we're enforcing the policy. If you respect us, we'll respect you back. Just treat them as a peer, treat them on the same level, don't ever look down upon them and you know, talk down to them. It doesn't work that way. You need to talk to them on the same level that you are. And a lot of times they respect that, they respect that when you talk to them as an adult, not as a child.

Candace also described the importance of acting like a peer, "I think it's really important that I don't try to make myself above them." Andrea described the importance of getting to know people's names.

> I guess I try to get to know every person's name in the building. Because the more background you know on them, it's so much easier to deal with that person if something happens either to them, or they cause some sort of problem in the dorm because they know you care about them before you are in the disciplinarian role.

Managers using the strategy of speaking as a peer were able to manage the Equality/Expertise tension by remaining friendly and a peer as they were in an authority role. Speaking to residents as an adult and being respectful were used to treat the resident as a peer.

Summary of strategies. On-site managers used two main strategies to manage tensions of Equality/Expertise. Many of the apartment managers utilized the strategy of denial which allowed them to deny the aspect of Equality to maintain their managerial expertise. The other strategy used was speaking as a peer. Resident assistants often used this strategy to maintain a sense of equality and friendliness while enforcing rules and policies.

Strategies for managing tensions of Impartiality/Favoritism

The impartiality/favoritism tension generally occurred when a "friend" wanted a special favor and the on-site manager needed to treat everyone the same. This tension seemed most pronounced with resident assistants because of their required roles of friend and disciplinarian. Resident apartment mangers

reported this tension less often, perhaps because of their clear rules about not developing relationships with their residents. The most commonly used strategies were defining friendship requirements, denial, and segmentation.

Defining friendship requirements

Resident assistants most commonly used this strategy when they stated that a "true friend" would be understanding of their job position and wouldn't ask for special favors. Andrea, a resident assistant for three years, used this strategy.

> Sometimes if they question me, I say, you know, I'm still close to you, I still am. I don't mean to drag you down, but you know that's my position ever since you moved in and as a good friend you should respect that I'm just trying to do my job well. Usually people are really receptive to that.

Jeff, another RA., describes his friends as:

> the people that I usually befriend that are residents are usually, well you know the phrase birds of a feather, they're usually people that follow the rules, that think before they act and they understand completely that when I need to ask them to quiet down for quiet hours or something like that, they understand that I'm doing my job and they don't have a problem complying.

Becky also described her friends as being understanding and respectful of her job.

> They're my friends, they should realize, at least I think they should. And if they ever didn't, I would tell them. Not a big issue, because most of my friends really respect that, respect my job, so that [fairness] wasn't really a problem.
> She also notes:
> I never had a friend try to do anything like that. I don't think they'd want to put me in that position because they were a friend, you know.

Kia, another resident assistant at a different campus, also felt a true friend would be understanding of her job requirements.

> If I have to confront one of the residents who is a friend of mine, they are more accepting of my job duties. For instance, if I had

> to write-up one of my friends for their behavior, they usually accept this without any problems and let it go. If they are truly a friend, they will respect your job and let you do it.

A strategy for managing the tensions of the Impartiality/Favoritism dialectic was using the definition of a friend to show why a "true friend" wouldn't make requests for favoritism. By defining the other person as a friend, the manager can state that as a true friend they should understand and respect their job.

Denial

Another tactic used was to deny one aspect of the tension. For example, Ryan, a resident assistant, practiced denial when he knowingly let his underage friend drink without writing him up. He describes the effects of this strategy:

> The friend I referred to last year, he, towards the end of the year, he got into drinking a lot and it was hard, I never enforced the policy against him. Most of his friends were 21, but even though he was under age theoretically I was supposed to write him up when he would drink, I never did. I let him slip through the cracks, which was wrong, but I learned from it, I really did because it came back to haunt me. Just that the other residents knew about it, so they would try to get away with it and from then on, it's kind of like dominoes, the domino effect where if I let one person, I have to do that.

Betty, an apartment manager, practiced the strategy of denial in the opposite way of Ryan. She describes how they purposely did not socialize with residents to remain impartial.

> We don't socialize with them. You are courteous and do visit with them and things like this, but you do not socialize with them because then, we have 144 units, and if they were to find you socializing, others would be thinking you were playing favorites that that person was getting special treatment. So, we don't socialize with our residents.

Managers practicing the strategy of denial were able to manage the tension of Impartiality/Favoritism by responding to one aspect of the tension

while ignoring the other. Either the manager would favor the friend while ignoring the need to be impartial, or the manager would remain impartial by not becoming friends. Usually this strategy was ultimately not very satisfying to the managers.

Segmentation

The other strategy often employed by on-site managers to manage tensions of Impartiality/Favoritism was segmentation. Certain parts of the relationship are compartmentalized. For example, Sandy, an apartment manager, described how she was "careful not to talk to her [a friend] about, I don't talk to her about any other tenants here." Likewise, Ivy, another apartment manager, described "being careful about what you say, especially after hours to tenants and not talk about personal stuff." Even some of the resident assistants practiced segmentation tactics. Vicky, a resident assistant for three years, described using the segmentation tactic in a couple different instances. She used segmentation when dealing with a friend who was smoking marijuana on campus.

> I've had a friend I knew was marijuana smoking and I didn't quite know when, and I knew the friend did it, but I didn't tell anyone that that was what was going on. But if I would've walked past and smelled it, like when I was roving, I'd have to do something about it, and they knew it.

She also described a situation where she was not in the resident assistant role, which she compartmentalized from her friend role.

> We had a confidentiality problem one time where one friend was dating another friend and then he started seeing another girl [on her floor], and I just let my friend know that that was what I saw, and that was supposed to be a break in confidentiality from this other girl's point of view because I was the RA telling this other girl, when I was not the RA at the time, I was the friend and it's hard to separate the two.

By segmenting the various parts of their relationships with residents,

these on-site managers were able to manage the tension of Impartiality/Favoritism. However, some of the residents didn't always know when they were in the friend role and when they were in the manager role, which caused more tensions.

Summary of strategies. The tension of Impartiality/Favoritism was managed through the use of three strategies. Resident assistants often used the definition of a friend to manage tensions. They would define a true friend as someone that would be understanding of their job and not put them in a bad situation by asking favors. Other managers used the strategy of denial in which they would deny one aspect of the dialectic. Some would avoid enforcing rules with friends, while others would not become friends to remain impartial. The final strategy, segmentation, allowed managers to show favoritism when they were not in their job role.

Summary

This chapter described the findings of the data. The first section described the tensions experienced by on-site managers. On-site managers experienced tensions of Autonomy/Connection, Expressiveness/Protectiveness, and Judgement/Acceptance. Examples of tensions with Autonomy/Connection that were commonly mentioned were people calling the resident managers after hours for minor problems that were not emergencies. For other managers, tensions of Autonomy/Connection occurred when people would just walk into their homes without knocking. Resident assistants seemed to experience this tension more when other resident assistants would enter their rooms when they were gone without asking permission first. Other times this tension occurred when the resident assistant or resident manager wanted to do a particular activity, but could not do it without constant interruptions. Tensions of

Expressiveness/Protectiveness commonly included trying to keep dating private. Other times tensions of Expressiveness/Protectiveness occurred when a resident disclosed more than the on-site manager wanted to know about the resident's personal life. Tensions of Judgement/Acceptance commonly included a manager wanting to be understanding of a particular resident's situation, but needing to enforce policies uniformly. Another common example of the tension of Judgement/Acceptance occurred when on-site managers disliked a resident, but needed to avoid showing any dislike.

The next section described participants' definitions of friendship, the multiple roles of resident managers and resident assistants, and the tensions associated with those roles. Friendship was commonly defined as being made up of the following characteristics: supportive, confidential, enjoy being around, and having differing degrees. Resident assistants all considered "being a friend" as a role. None of the apartment managers listed being a friend as a role, but many mentioned friend-like roles such as being a shoulder to cry on. When asked if any of the roles they mentioned ever conflicted, residential managers viewed the roles as conflicting in terms of time constraints. However, resident assistants viewed the friend and enforcer/disiplinarian roles as conflicting. Two tensions were associated with these multiple roles: Expertise/Equality and Impartiality/Favoritism. Common examples of tensions of Expertise/Equality were enforcing policies as a resident assistant, while still trying to be a friend. Common examples of tensions of Impartiality/Favoritism were being asked to overlook a policy violation of a friend, when the resident assistant was required as a part of the job to enforce policies equally.

The final section of this chapter examined the strategies used to manage the tensions created by the Autonomy/Connection,

Expressiveness/Protectiveness, Judgement/Acceptance, Equality/Expertise, and Impartiality/Favoritism dialectics. Eight different strategies were used to manage these tensions: segmentation, denial, spiraling inversion, reaffirmation, empathy, emotion control, speaking as a peer, and defining friendship requirements. Segmentation was the most commonly reported strategy and was used to manage tensions of Autonomy/Connection and Expressiveness/Protectiveness. On-site managers using this strategy would often discuss work-related topics only during office hours. Another commonly used strategy was denial, which was used to manage the tensions of Expertise/Equality and Impartiality/Favoritism. Managers using denial would respond only to one aspect of the tension. Another strategy used to manage tensions of Autonomy/Connection and Expressiveness/Protectiveness was spiraling inversion. On-site managers using spiraling inversion would respond to one pole of the dialectic and then the other in a cyclical pattern. For example, many managers reported they would go away for the weekend to have time alone and then come back to devote time to their residents. Reaffirmation was also used to manage tensions of Autonomy/Connection and Expressiveness/Protectiveness. On-site managers using this strategy viewed the phone calls and interruptions as just part of the job and felt the residents must really care to be coming over or calling. Tensions of Judgement/Acceptance were often managed by empathy and emotion control. Managers using the strategy of empathy would ask the resident to "put themselves in my shoes." Emotion control was used to avoid showing any dislike (judgement) towards a resident. Tensions of Expertise/Equality were managed by the strategy of speaking as a peer. Resident assistants reported that by talking to residents as peers, they could maintain friendliness while enforcing policies. The final strategy used to manage tensions was defining

friendship requirements. On-site managers used this strategy to manage tensions of Impartiality/Favoritism. Managers using this strategy would often state that a "good friend" would never put them in a bad position by asking them to do a favor that would jeopardize their job.

CHAPTER FOUR: DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS

In this chapter, instances of support and extension of the descriptive frameworks in the findings section are examined. First, the tensions supporting research question one (the dialectical tensions experienced by on-site managers) are provided. Next, findings related to research question two (ways in which the requirement of friend and of expert are contradictory) are examined. Finally, findings related to research question three (the communication strategies used to manage the tensions) are discussed.

Research Question One

This section examines the instances of support for research question one which examined the dialectical tensions experienced by on-site managers. As the researcher expected, the tensions of Autonomy/Connection, Expressiveness/Protectiveness, and Judgement/Acceptance were common tensions experienced by this population. Each of these tensions is examined in terms of the descriptive framework, Baxter & Montgomery (1996) dialectical tensions.

Autonomy/Connection

Baxter & Montgomery (1996) conceptualized this dialectical tension in terms of the closeness of relationships. Instead of viewing closeness as a high degree of interdependence, similarity, or positive affection, Baxter & Montgomery describe a dialectical perspective of separateness and connectedness. Likewise, Rawlins (1989) describes this tension in friendships as freedom to be independent and freedom to be dependent. These authors frame the dialectic in terms of relationships, either romantic or friendships.

The findings supported this dialectic in a slightly different way. Rather than connection referring to the connection with a single person, connection

referred to the connection with all the residents. In addition, connection often was seen as connection with the job. On-site managers often described "always being on the job." Autonomy was often described in terms of being able to do activities as an individual, much like Rawlins' freedom to be independent. The on-site managers also viewed separateness as the ability to "separate from the job."

The findings of this study expand the notions of Autonomy/Connection to describe the tensions experienced by a group of individuals that are closely tied to their jobs and their clients. Many of the on-site managers described "always being at work" and stated that there was no separation between work and home. Typically workers in other occupations would be likely to develop connections with coworkers and perhaps some of their clients, but they also would have time to themselves outside of the work arena. For on-site managers because of their unique working and living arrangements this tension becomes pronounced.

Resident apartment managers seemed to experience this tension more often when they did not have a separate office space outside their homes. Some managers even had to contend with residents walking into their homes without knocking first. For most resident managers with offices outside the home and set office hours, the tension occurred when residents would call after hours for minor problems. Several of the apartment managers described their jobs as "24 hour a day, 7 days a week" and a couple commented on their lack of a "real vacation" in over six years.

Resident assistants also encountered this problem when they would have to take care of problems when they were technically "off work." Other times the tension occurred when the resident assistant had other activities to do, such as studying or spending time with friends, and were unable to do those activities

because of constant interruptions from their residents. Many of the resident assistants also described their jobs as "24 hour a day, 7 days a week."

Expressiveness/Protectiveness

Another dialectic tension supported by the findings of this study was Expressiveness/Protectiveness. Baxter & Montgomery (1996) and Rawlins (1983) developed this dialectical perspective to provide an alternative to traditional notions of self-disclosure and responsiveness. Their dialectical perspective describes the need for self to be protected from the vulnerability and risk of self-disclosure while at the same time needing to disclose to benefit the relationship. Again, this disclosure is viewed within the context of relationships.

Residential apartment managers and resident assistants experienced this tension when parts of their lives were disclosed without the manager intending to disclose. Because they lived and worked in close proximity to their residents and because they were in high profile positions, manager's personal lives were often under close scrutiny. This tension seemed most pronounced for young female resident assistants and apartment managers as they were dating. For resident assistants this "scrutiny" often came from other staff members more than from the residents. For apartment managers the tension seemed to occur when neighbors were watching. Other times the tension would occur when a resident disclosed more than the manager wanted to know about.

The findings of this study broaden the conceptions of expressiveness and protectiveness to include involuntary disclosure that would occur from being in close proximity to their clients. In addition, it also would include clients divulging more information than a manager might be comfortable hearing. These tensions seemed most pronounced with younger female managers and seemed to occur because of relationships that developed because of constant interactions.

Judgement/Acceptance

The dialectical tension of Judgement/Acceptance occurred when managers were required to make judgements based on set criteria, but wanted to be understanding of individual's circumstances. In addition, managers also had to appear accepting of clients they judged harshly and did not like. Bridge & Baxter's (1992) and Rawlins' (1989) describe this tension occurring between friends when one friend judges the other's behavior and yet as a friend should be accepting of the behavior.

The findings of this study expand Bridge & Baxter (1992) and Rawlins (1989) notions of Judgement/Acceptance. Resident managers often encountered situations where they had to judge a resident based on set criteria and policies, but the resident had individual circumstances that made it difficult not to be accepting of the resident in that situation. Other times managers encountered difficult clients that they judged and did not like, but they had to appear accepting. Resident managers often described needing to control the expression of anger and frustration which would show a judgement towards the resident.

Resident assistants also experienced tensions with judgement and acceptance. Several resident assistants had difficulties enforcing the policies and making judgements because they had done the same behaviors at one time, so they were more accepting of the circumstances. Other times, resident assistants had to try to separate the behavior which they judged from the person who they accepted. Like the resident managers, resident assistants also experienced tensions when trying to control expressions of anger and frustration.

The findings of this study expanded Bridge & Baxter's (1992) and Rawlins' (1989) conceptions of the Judgement/Acceptance dialectical tension. Resident

managers and resident assistants experienced tensions because of the need to express certain judgements (rules and policies) as part of their job, but not to express other judgements (dislike of residents personally). In addition, resident assistants were in the unique position of trying to judge peers according to rules and policies, but often they were accepting of behaviors because they had done the behaviors themselves. The dialectical tension reported in this study broadens the traditional ideas of judgement and acceptance to include clients, not just friends.

Summary

This section examined the dialectical tensions of the findings section and the ways in which they broadened the descriptive framework categories. Autonomy/Connection was broadened to include the connection to the job and the clients. Expressiveness/Protectiveness was extended to include involuntary self-disclosure that occurs from living in close proximity to residents and interacting on a regular basis with residents. Finally, Judgement/Acceptance was expanded to apply to judgements made as a part of the job requirement.

Research Question Two

Research question two examined the ways in which the on-site managers perceived the requirements of expert and friend to be contradictory. On-site managers were asked to define a friend and to describe the multiple roles they had as a part of their job. The findings supported the two tensions the researcher had suspected: Equality/Expertise and Impartiality/Favoritism. This section examines the implications of these findings.

Friendship

When asked to describe a friend, the on-site managers used definitions with similar characteristics. The most commonly mentioned characteristics were

supportive, confidential or someone you can trust, and someone you enjoy being around. Most participants stated that there were differing degrees of friendship. The on-site manager's definition of friendship was very similar to Hays (1988) definition of friendship as:

> voluntary interdependence between two persons over time, that is intended to facilitate the social-emotional goals of the participants, and may involve varying types and degrees of companionship, intimacy, affection, and mutual assistance (p. 395).

Interestingly, resident assistants all stated they would consider some of their residents to be friends. In addition, resident assistants saw "being a friend" as a part of their job roles. Most resident assistants noted differing levels of friendship with their residents.

Resident managers were divided on the question of they considered any of their residents to be friends. Some managers stated that they no longer were friends with residents because of experiences in the past. Yet, these managers also described the job as lonely or described their need to keep distance from their residents as a "real shame." Other managers said that they were friends with residents, but not "close friends." None of the resident managers felt "being a friend" was one of their job roles, but several mentioned "being a shoulder to cry on" or "being a role model" as job roles.

Expertise/Equality

The dialectic of Expertise/Equality is described by Billig et. al. (1988) conception of the "paradox of the friendly expert." This tension occurs when experts are expected to be friendly, but if they are too friendly it threatens their expertise and vice versa. The findings of this study supported this paradox.

Resident apartment managers responded that they were generally careful not to get "too friendly" with their residents so that they wouldn't be put in a bad

situation. Resident assistants felt more tensions with this dialectic. They were required as a part of their job role to "be a friend" to their residents, yet they also needed to be authority figures. A couple resident assistants commented on the unique nature of the role requirement of being a friend. The tension occurred when resident assistants needed to show they were being sincere friends, yet the residents knew they were required to be a friend as a part of their job. So for the resident assistants, friendliness was seen as a form of expertise. However, some resident assistants encountered difficulties when they became too friendly with residents maintaining their expertise which led to tensions of Impartiality/Favoritism.

The findings supported Billig et. al. (1988) "paradox of the friendly expert." This tension seemed most pronounced for resident assistants because every resident assistant interviewed described being a friend as a job role. Therefore, for resident assistants friendliness was a form of expertise which in turn prevented the residents from seeing the RA as truly friendly.

Impartiality/Favoritism

The tension of Impartiality/Favoritism was described by Bridge & Baxter in their study of friends that were also work associates (1992). This tension also occurred for many of the on-site managers as they dealt with their residents. While not all of the resident managers considered residents to be friends, several commented that they did not become friends with residents because of situations in which the resident had taken advantage of them in the past. So, even for those managers that did not consider residents to be friends, the Impartiality/Favoritism dialectic was important. Resident assistants also experienced tensions with Impartiality/Favoritism because they were friends with residents on their floors, but they had to enforce rules and policies which did not

favor their friends. Nearly all of the resident assistants mentioned that the roles of friend and disciplinarian conflicted. Apartment mangers also mentioned instances of residents wanting special favors.

The findings of this study supported the Impartiality/Favoritism dialectical tension (Bridge & Baxter, 1992). Especially for resident assistants, the tension occurred because the demands of being a friend and the demands of being an enforcer were conflicting. The findings also expanded the conception of the Impartiality/Favoritism dialectic to include individuals that were not "friends." Instead, just being friendly to a resident often resulted in the resident asking favors.

Research Question Three

This section examines the findings of research question three which asked what communication strategies were used by on-site managers to manage the dialectical tensions experienced. Eight different strategies were used to manage the tensions experienced by the on-site managers: segmentation, denial, spiraling inversion, reaffirmation, empathy, emotion control, speaking as a peer, and defining friendship requirements. Segmentation, denial, spiraling inversion, and reaffirmation were strategies suggested by Baxter & Montgomery (1996). The researcher did not anticipate the use of empathy, emotion control, speaking as a peer, or defining friendship requirements as communication strategies used to manage dialectical tensions. These strategies are examined in the following section and the implications of the findings for supporting and expanding the descriptive framework of strategies are examined.

Segmentation

Segmentation, compartmentalizing parts of the relationship, was the most commonly used strategy for managing tensions of Autonomy/Connection and

Expressiveness/Protectiveness (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996). Resident managers and resident assistants using this strategy would often segment time for themselves or physically remove themselves from work. Although this strategy was commonly used, problems occurred when the needs of residents spilled over into the segmented areas. For instance, several resident managers communicated to their tenants that they should be called after hours for emergencies only, but often the residents seemed to ignore this message. Some managers explicitly defined an emergency and described the procedures to go through to maintain their space and free-time. Also, several managers refused to discuss anything work-related after hours. Other managers "put on different hats" after hours and segmented their roles accordingly.

In addition, several resident assistants used segmentation to manage tensions of Impartiality/Favoritism. One resident assistant used this strategy to determine when she would be required to write up a friend that was smoking marijuana. She had told them that if she was to catch it while doing the activities required in her job role, she would have to write them up. Thus, by segmenting when she was a friend from when she was in the job role (on duty or roving), the resident assistant was able to manage tensions of Impartiality/Favoritism.

Segmentation was a commonly used tactic, but it proved difficult to use in some instances. Some resident managers without offices and resident assistants do not have set hours, so defining when was "after hours" was sometimes difficult. Resident managers with offices and clear guidelines for when they should be contacted after hours seemed to use this strategy most successfully.

Denial

Denial refers to the strategy of responding to one pole of the dialectic at

the expense of the other (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996; Baxter, 1988). Denial was commonly used to manage the tensions of Expertise/Equality and Impartiality/Favoritism. Resident managers often used denial to manage tensions of Expertise/Equality. Most resident managers said they were careful not to get too friendly with their residents so that they would remain professional. Some resident managers even mentioned that their management groups or their supervisors had warned them about being too friendly. So, by responding only to the expert aspect of the dialectic, the equality aspect is denied. The tension is managed, but as several apartment managers noted, the job can be very lonely. Many managers noted a specific situation in which being too friendly endangered their expertise, so they instead focused on remaining expert. For most managers this strategy didn't seem very satisfying. Many commented that it was a shame that they had to do that and reported feeling like the "bad people of the complex."

Likewise, the tension of Impartiality/Fairness was also often managed through denial with mixed results. One resident assistant described favoring a friend by never enforcing policies against him, but stated that he had almost decided not to come back the following year because of the situation. One of the resident managers reported giving a resident extra breaks and having it come back to haunt them. Another spoke of not socializing with residents in order to remain impartial, but admitted that it was hard because there were people that would probably be good friends otherwise. So while denial worked in the short term, when the on-site managers reflected on the use of this strategy many found it less desirable.

Spiraling Inversion

Spiraling inversion was another commonly used strategy for managing tensions of Autonomy/Connection and Expressiveness/Protectiveness. On-site

managers using spiraling inversion would respond to one pole and then to the other in an ongoing cycle. Many of the resident managers reported going to coffee or shopping at certain times every day just to get away and have time to themselves. Most managers employing this strategy needed to physically leave the premise and respond to their need for time to themselves and then they could come back and deal with the residents' needs. Resident assistants on all campuses also used this strategy by taking their nights out and weekends out to get away and have time alone. However, resident assistants would occasionally encounter problems even when they were away from the workplace, so even physically removing themselves did not always keep the areas of work and non-work separate. For example, one resident assistant was away from campus, but ran into someone doing something that was inappropriate, so she had to deal with it, even though she was not in the work setting. Overall, spiraling inversion seemed to be an effective strategy for responding to the Autonomy/Connection and Expressiveness/Protectiveness dialectical tensions. Some resident managers found this strategy difficult because they had no assistant managers to leave the responsibility of taking care of the complex.

Reaffirmation

Reaffirmation (integration) is a strategy in which the on-site manager recognizes that the tensions will always exist and celebrates the complexity of the situation (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996). Some of the resident managers and resident assistants used this strategy to manage tensions of Autonomy/Connection and Expressiveness/Protectiveness. On-site managers using this strategy commented that the phone calls in the middle of the night and the constant interruptions were just part of the job. In addition, several resident assistants using this strategy commented that the residents must really care and

trust them to keep coming by. One resident manager considered her job an ideal retirement job and said that, "if I wasn't here, I'd be doing volunteer work. I know that's what I'd be doing because I'm not one to sit around, can't do that, retire and sit around or you're gonna die." Several of the older resident managers described the job as a retirement or semi-retirement job and viewed the phone calls after hours as a positive thing, a way to interact with a variety of people.

Empathy

While I originally did not anticipate the use of this strategy, empathy was used to manage the tension of Judgement/Acceptance. On-site managers would try to understand the person's situation by actively listening and then would ask the resident to empathize with their position. Many resident managers and resident assistants asked the resident to "put yourself in my shoes." On-site managers would communicate that they understood the person, but that they needed to follow the rules and they were just doing their job. Thus, they could accept the person, but still make the judgements required of their job. The resident was asked to be accepting of this and to empathize with the manager's position. This strategy seemed to be quite effective for dealing with the manager's personal need to be understanding of the person's situation, but still fulfill their job need for making uniform judgements.

Emotion Control

Likewise, I did not expect maintaining control of the expression of anger and frustration to be a strategy for dealing with tensions of Judgement/Acceptance. On-site managers frequently mentioned the need to maintain control of emotions, especially anger and frustration, when dealing with difficult residents. Outwardly expressing those emotions would show personal

judgement, and while the on-site managers need to make judgements according to set rules and policies, they are supposed to remain professional and not make personal judgements about their residents. In some situations this tension becomes pronounced, especially when a resident is yelling at the resident manager or resident assistant. Several managers mentioned being extremely patient with residents and going somewhere else to express their emotions.

Speaking as a Peer

One strategy used by the resident assistants to manage the tensions of Expertise/Equality was to speak to the residents as a peer when in their authority role. While writing up a resident or asking them to follow a policy, resident assistants treated the resident as an adult and didn't talk down to them. In this way, they could act as expert, but still retain a sense of equality with the resident. As one RA described it, "Let them know that the issue is the issue and when it's over, it's dropped." Only resident assistants seemed to use this strategy for managing tensions of Expertise/Equality.

Defining Friendship Requirements

Another unexpected strategy used to manage tensions of Impartiality/Favoritism was the definition of friendship requirements. The managers and resident assistants using this strategy stated that a "true friend" would never put them in a bad position by asking them favors that would jeopardize their job. By using the characteristic of support, on-site managers could use support to limit a friend's behavior. A true friend would be supportive of their job, so a true friend would never ask them to do anything that would hurt them in their jobs. This was an unexpected twist on the requirements to "help out a friend" which could lead to favoritism, instead the manager's friends were asked to "help them out" by following policies and not asking for favors.

Implications for Communication Scholars

One contribution to the field of communication from this research is the broadening of the traditional separate relational categories of friend, client, coworker, neighbor, and acquaintance. One of the goals of this study was to examine a particular group which experiences blurred categories of relationships. Rather than having segmented roles, the on-site managers were enacting multiple roles simultaneously. If the relationships of the on-site manager and their residents were examined only as a professional-client relationship, the larger picture of blended relationships of friend-neighbor-client would be missing. The on-site manager has much broader and richer relationships than simple concrete categories can describe.

In addition, the use of a dialectical perspective was used to attempt to capture some of the "complexity and disorder of social life, not with the goal of 'smoothing out' its rough edges but with the goal of understanding its ongoing messiness" (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996, p. 3). Dialectical theory, as conceptualized by Baxter and Montgomery, was expanded in this study to include tensions of Expertise/Equality which are not included in their categories of tensions. In addition, the setting for application of a dialectical perspective was expanded in this study to include a working and living setting. While dialectical perspectives have often been used in studying personal relationships, this study also applied a dialectical perspective to the relationship of an individual and their work. Autonomy/Connection which traditionally refers to either romantic relationships or friendships with a single person was broadened to include connection with all the residents. In addition, connection also was broadened to include connection with the manager's job. Expressiveness/Protectiveness traditionally referred to the need for the self to be

protected from the vulnerability and risk of self-disclosure while at the same time needing to disclose to benefit the relationship. This conception of Expressiveness/Protectiveness was broadened to include involuntary self disclosure that occurred from living in close proximity to their clients. In addition, Judgement/Acceptance which traditionally did not include emotional expression was broadened to include emotion management. Also, the tension of Judgement/Acceptance was traditionally used only to describe friendships, not relationships with clients. However, the dialectical perspectives did not account for all the tensions experienced by the apartment managers. A few of the resident assistants and apartment managers mentioned tensions that did not fit neatly into the descriptive framework. For example, a couple resident assistants mentioned tensions which occurred when they had to do more work because another resident assistant had burned out. In addition, some of the apartment managers that were couples managing a property mentioned tensions of being around their spouse all the time. As these cases illustrate, Baxter and Montgomery's categories of dialectical tensions did not neatly fit all the tensions experienced by this population. Dialectical theory has limits in explaining all the tensions experienced by living and working in the same place.

In addition, communication played a vital role in managing this complexity and disorder. Some of the most successful strategies used for managing the tensions experienced by these on-site managers are basic communication concepts. Active listening, perception checking, managing nonverbal communication, and communicating consistent messages all were important strategies for managing tensions created by the manager's unique working and living arrangements. Four strategies were discovered that broaden the strategies suggested by Baxter and Montgomery (1996). Empathy, emotion control,

speaking as a peer, and defining friendship requirements were strategies used to manage dialectical tensions for this population which might apply to other populations.

For resident assistants, staff members provided a social support network. However, apartment managers rarely knew of other managers and did not associate with them. Several expressed the loneliness of the job in which they had no coworkers and needed to maintain an arm's length from their residents. Knowledge of other strategies for managing tensions seems of practical importance for these managers so that they could have some flexibility in choosing whether to develop friendships with their clients. For some managers that might otherwise be isolated from interactions (retired or semi-retired individuals), the job has obvious advantages. For others that may have needs for interactions elsewhere, the job can be confining.

This study begins to illuminate some practical issues for individuals living and working in the same place. It is likely that owners of home-based businesses and telecommuters would experience many of the same tensions. Tensions of Autonomy/Connection are likely because clients might perceive calling the home-based worker at odd hours to be appropriate because they're always at home. In addition, the tendency to have trouble leaving work "at the office" could likely be a problem for other types of home-based workers. Monitoring telecommuter's e-mail messages could be a tension of Expressiveness/Protectiveness. As home-based employment continues to grow, communication scholars need to find ways to assist these workers in managing tensions that might occur. The strategies used by the participants in this study are primarily communication based strategies. Communication strategies would likely be used by other home-base workers, such as clearly communicating

boundaries of home and work to employers, clients, and family members. The advantages of working at home (flexibility, no commute, childcare), could easily be overshadowed by the tensions of home-based work, unless these tensions can be managed through communication.

Suggestions for Further Research

The complexity of the on-site manager's relationships with their clients and the blurring of traditional contexts of interaction (work and home as separate) might continue as more people decide to work from their homes. This study is just one snapshot into the fuzziness experienced by one group of home-based workers. While on-site managers probably have a situation unlike other home-based workers because of their unique relationship with their clients, many of the tensions experienced are likely to be the same for other home-based workers. As communication scholars, we need to examine the complexity of relationships and aim to discover how individuals manage those relationships through communication.

This study was limited to only 27 participants in a primarily rural area. Further studies should examine if these tensions are present in other geographic areas. In addition, only two residential motel managers were interviewed, so I was unable to compare their responses to the other on-site managers. As more individuals begin to work from their homes, the tensions reported by those workers and more importantly the communication strategies used to manage those tensions should be examined. A comparison of the tensions experienced by other home-based workers and on-site managers would illustrate tensions inherent in working at home. This study serves as a small beginning contribution to a larger need for research into this area.

Appendix A

The results of the quantitative questions 3A, B, C, and D are reported in this appendix. Several of the resident managers and resident assistants stated that they did not feel they could give any of these issues a numerical rating of importance. Other managers skipped answering the question and began commenting in more qualitative terms. All questions were asked with a 10-point scale, with 1 being very unimportant and 10 being very important.

Question 3A asked how important of an issue the participants thought privacy was for them. Answers varied on this question and several respondents said they could not give it a rating. The mean and median for the entire group of participants and for each subgroup are listed below (apartment managers and motel managers were combined due to the limited number of motel managers).

TOTAL GROUP (21):	6.83 Mean	8 Median
Resident Managers (9):	8.05 Mean	8 Median
Resident Assistants (12):	5.91 Mean	8 Median

Question 3B asked the participants to rate the importance of the issue of fairness. Fewer participants answered this question, but those that did were often very emphatic about their answers. The mean and median for question 3B were:

TOTAL GROUP (20):	8.80 Mean	10 Median
Resident Managers (9):	9.44 Mean	10 Median
Resident Assistants (11):	8.27 Mean	9.5 Median

Question 3C asked participants to rate the importance of rule enforcement. Again, several participants did not give this issue a numerical value. Mean and median for question 3C were:

TOTAL GROUP (18):	9.028 Mean	9.5 Median
Resident Managers (8):	9.063 Mean	9.5 Median
Resident Assistants (10):	9.000 Mean	9.5 Median

Question 3D asked participants to rate the importance of confidentiality. This question had the most response. Mean and median were:

TOTAL GROUP (23):	9.543 Mean	10 Median
Resident Managers (11):	9.136 Mean	10 Median
Resident Assistants (12):	9.917 Mean	10 Median

As this quantitative data illustrates, all of these issues were important to both resident assistants and resident managers. However, many of the managers felt they could not assign a numerical value to these issues. Instead, they preferred to give detailed descriptions and examples of these tensions and issues.

Appendix B

Written Consent Form

As part of my master's work in Communication Studies at the University of Montana, I am studying the tensions faced by resident assistants, residential apartment managers, and residential motel/hotel managers because of their unique working situation. I would like to interview residential managers to hear their opinions.

I am asking your permission to participate in an interview for this purpose. If you are younger than 18 years old, you are not eligible to participate. The interview should last about one hour. In this time I would like to ask you a few questions about your experiences. I will encourage you to tell your thoughts and feelings about any of the tensions faced by individuals living and working in the same place.

Some or all of the information obtained from the interview will be included in my final paper, but all names will be kept confidential. If you grant me permission, I may also tape the interview. All information from audio-tapes and data sheets will be kept in a secured area and will be destroyed upon completion of this study. Only myself and my supervisor will have access to this information.

If you feel that any part or all of this interview should be excluded from use, please tell me immediately following the interview. You may choose to not answer any question or end the interview at anytime. If you would like, I will mail a one page summary of the results to you following the completion of my study.

I,_____, have read the above information and agree to be interviewed.
Participant Signature:_____
Date:_____

If applicable:

I, _____, agree to have the interview taped.
Participant Signature:_____

Questions or concerns, Please contact: April Ennis Keippel (406) 728-5515 or Professor Sally Planalp (406) 243-4951.
In the event you are injured as a result of this research you should individually seek appropriate medical treatment. If the injury is caused by the negligence of the University or any of its employees, you are entitled to reimbursement or compensation pursuant to the Comprehensive State Insurance Plan established by the Department of Administration under the authority of M.C.A., Title 2, Chapter 9. In the event of a claim for such injury, further information may be obtained from the University's Claims Representative or University Legal Counsel.

Appedix C
Interview Schedule

1.Describe your job.

A. What do you like best about your job?

B. What do you like least about your job?

2. What are some of the advantages of living where you work?

A. What are some of the disadvantages?

3. On a scale from very important as a ten to very unimportant as a one, how important of an issue is:

A. Privacy?

1. (If important) describe a situation in which privacy was an issue.

a. What ways (strategies) do you use to deal with tensions regarding privacy?

B. Fairness (treating residents equally)?

1. (If important) describe a situation in which fairness was an issue.

a. What ways (strategies) do you use to deal with tensions regarding fairness?

C. Rule enforcement?

1. (If important) describe a situation in which rule enforcement was an issue.

a. What ways (strategies) do you use to deal with tensions regarding rule enforcement?

D. Confidentiality?

1. (If important) describe a situation in which confidentiality was an issue.

a. What ways (strategies) do you use to deal with tensions regarding confidentiality?

4. What is your definition of a friend?

a. Would you consider any of your residents to be friends?

5. Have you ever encountered a situation where your relationship with a resident caused tensions with your job duties?

A. Tell me about what happened.

B. What do you generally do in this type of situation?

6. What are some of the multiple roles you have as part of your job?

a. Do these ever conflict? If so, in what ways?

7. What are some of differences between your job living where you work and traditional jobs away from home?

8. How do you deal with tensions or conflicting demands, if any, that occur from living and working in the same place?

Probe: If I was going to start a job like this, what advice would you give me for dealing with these tensions?

9. Is there anything else you'd like to tell me about the tensions from living where you work?

10. Do you know of anyone else in a similiar position who I might interview?

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